



## COLLECTED POEMS

*By Dylan Thomas*

COLLECTED POEMS, 1934-1952

DEATHS AND ENTRANCES

Poems

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A  
YOUNG DOG

Fictional autobiography

UNDER MILK WOOD

A play for voices

THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS

A film scenario

QUITE EARLY ONE MORNING

Broadcasts

A PROSPECT OF THE SEA

Stories and prose writings

LETTERS TO VERNON WATKINS

DYLAN THOMAS A BIBLIOGRAPHY

By John A. Rolph

DYLAN THOMAS

Collected Poems

1934-1952

LONDON

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TO  
CAITLIN



### Note

THE prologue in verse, written for this collected edition of my poems, is intended as an address to my readers, the strangers.

This book contains most of the poems I have written, and all, up to the present year, that I wish to preserve. Some of them I have revised a little, but if I went on revising everything that I now do not like in this book I should be so busy that I would have no time to try to write new poems.

I read somewhere of a shepherd who, when asked why he made, from within fairy rings, ritual observances to the moon to protect his flocks, replied 'I'd be a damn' fool if I didn't!' These poems, with all their crudities, doubts, and confusions, are written for the love of Man and in praise of God, and I'd be a damn' fool if they weren't.

*November 1952.*



## *Author's Prologue*

This day winding down now  
At God speeded summer's end  
In the torrent salmon sun,  
In my seashaken house  
On a breakneck of rocks 5  
Tangled with chirrup and fruit,  
Froth, flute, fin and quill  
At a wood's dancing hoof,  
By scummed, starfish sands  
With their fishwife cross 10  
Gulls, pipers, cockles, and sails,  
Out there, crow black, men  
Tackled with clouds, who kneel  
To the sunset nets,  
Geese nearly in heaven, boys 15  
Stabbing, and herons, and shells  
That speak seven seas,  
Eternal waters away  
From the cities of nine  
Days' night whose towers will catch 20  
In the religious wind  
Like stalks of tall, dry straw,  
At poor peace I sing  
To you strangers (though song  
Is a burning and crested act, 25  
The fire of birds in

The world's turning wood,	
For my sawn, splay sounds),	
Out of these seathumbed leaves	
That will fly and fall	30
Like leaves of trees and as soon	
Crumble and undie	
Into the dogdayed night.	
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 You king singsong owls, who moonbeam  
 The flickering runs and dive  
 The dingle furred deer dead!  
 Huloo, on plumbed bryns,  
 O my ruffled ring dove 45  
 In the hooting, nearly dark  
 With Welsh and reverent rook,  
 Coo rooing the woods' praise,  
 Who moons her blue notes from her nest  
 Down to the curlew herd! 40  
 Ho, hullaballoing clan  
 Agape, with woe  
 In your beaks, on the gabbing capes!  
 Heigh, on horseback hill, jack  
 Whisking hare! who 35  
 Hears, there, this fox light, my flood ship's  
 Clangour as I hew and smite  
 (A clash of anvils for my  
 Hubbub and fiddle, this tune  
 On a tongued puffball) 30  
 But animals thick as thieves  
 On God's rough tumbling grounds  
 (Hail to His beasthood!).  
 Beasts who sleep good and thin,  
 Hist, in hogsback woods! The haystacked 25  
 Hollow farms in a throng  
 Of waters cluck and cling,  
 And barnroofs cockcrow war!  
 O kingdom of neighbours, finned  
 Felled and quilled, flash to my patch 20



Work ark and the moonshine  
 Drinking Noah of the bay,  
 With pelt, and scale, and fleece:  
 Only the drowned deep bells  
 Of sheep and churches noise 15  
 Poor peace as the sun sets  
 And dark shoals every holy field.  
 We will ride out alone, and then,  
 Under the stars of Wales,  
 Cry, Multitudes of arks! Across 10  
 The water lidded lands,  
 Manned with their loves they'll move,  
 Like wooden islands, hill to hill  
 Huloo, my prowed dove with a flute!  
 Ahoy, old, sea-legged fox, 5  
 Tom, tit and Dai mouse!  
 My ark sings in the sun  
 At God speeded summer's end  
 And the flood flowers now.

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## *I see the boys of summer*

### I

I SEE the boys of summer in their ruin  
Lay the gold tithings barren,  
Setting no store by harvest, freeze the soils;  
There in their heat the winter floods  
Of frozen loves they fetch their girls,  
And drown the cargoed apples in their tides.

These boys of light are curdlers in their folly,  
Sour the boiling honey;  
The jacks of frost they finger in the hives;  
There in the sun the frigid threads  
Of doubt and dark they feed their nerves;  
The signal moon is zero in their voids.

I see the summer children in their mothers  
Split up the brawned womb's weathers,  
Divide the night and day with fairy thumbs;  
There in the deep with quartered shades  
Of sun and moon they paint their dams  
As sunlight paints the shelling of their heads.

I see that from these boys shall men of nothing  
Stature by seedy shifting,  
Or lame the air with leaping from its heats,  
There from their hearts the dogdayed pulse  
Of love and light bursts in their throats.  
O see the pulse of summer in the ice.

### I

## II

But seasons must be challenged or they totter  
 Into a chiming quarter  
 Where, punctual as death, we ring the stars,  
 There, in his night, the black-tongued bells  
 The sleepy man of winter pulls,  
 Nor blows back moon-and-midnight as she blows.

We are the dark deniers, let us summon  
 Death from a summer woman,  
 A muscling life from lovers in their gramp,  
 From the fair dead who flush the sea  
 The bright-eyed worm on Davy's lamp,  
 And from the planted womb the man of straw.

We summer boys in this four-winded spinning,  
 Green of the seaweeds' iron,  
 Hold up the noisy sea and drop her birds,  
 Pick the world's ball of wave and froth  
 To choke the deserts with her tides,  
 And comb the county gardens for a wreath

In spring we cross our foreheads with the holly,  
 Heigh ho the blood and berry,  
 And nail the merry squires to the trees,  
 Here love's damp muscle dries and dies,  
 Here break a kiss in no love's quarry  
 O see the poles of promise in the boys.

I see you boys of summer in your ruin.  
Man in his maggot's barren  
And boys are full and foreign in the pouch.  
I am the man your father was  
We are the sons of flint and pitch  
O see the poles are kissing as they cross.



*When once the twilight locks no longer*

WHEN once the twilight locks no longer  
Locked in the long worm of my finger  
Nor damned the sea that sped about my fist,  
The mouth of time sucked, like a sponge,  
The milky acid on each hinge,  
And swallowed dry the waters of the breast.

When the galactic sea was sucked  
And all the dry seabed unlocked,  
I sent my creature scouting on the globe,  
That globe itself of hair and bone  
That, sewn to me by nerve and brain,  
Had stringed my flask of matter to his rib.

My fuses timed to charge his heart,  
He blew like powder to the light  
And held a little sabbath with the sun,  
But when the stars, assuming shape,  
Drew in his eyes the straws of sleep,  
He drowned his father's magics in a dream.

All issue armoured, of the grave,  
The redhaired cancer still alive,  
The cataracted eyes that filmed their cloth;  
Some dead undid their bushy jaws,  
And bags of blood let out their flies;  
He had by heart the Christ-cross-row of death.

Sleep navigates the tides of time,  
The dry Sargasso of the tomb  
Gives up its dead to such a working sea;  
And sleep rolls mute above the beds  
Where fishes' food is fed the shades  
Who periscope through flowers to the sky.

When once the twilight screws were turned,  
And mother milk was stiff as sand,  
I sent my own ambassador to light;  
By trick or chance he fell asleep  
And conjured up a carcass shape  
To rob me of my fluids in his heart.

Awake, my sleeper, to the sun,  
A worker in the morning town,  
And leave the popped pickthank where he lies,  
The fences of the light are down,  
All but the briskest riders thrown,  
And worlds hang on the trees.

*A process in the weather of the heart*

A PROCESS in the weather of the heart  
Turns damp to dry, the golden shot  
Storms in the freezing tomb  
A weather in the quarter of the veins  
Turns night to day, blood in their suns  
Lights up the living worm

A process in the eye forwarns  
The bones of blindness, and the womb  
Drives in a death as life leaks out.

A darkness in the weather of the eye  
Is half its light, the fathomed sea  
Breaks on unangled land.  
The seed that makes a forest of the loin  
Forks half its fruit; and half drops down,  
Slow in a sleeping wind.

A weather in the flesh and bone  
Is damp and dry, the quick and dead  
Move like two ghosts before the eye.

A process in the weather of the world  
Turns ghost to ghost; each mothered child  
Sits in their double shade.  
A process blows the moon into the sun,  
Pulls down the shabby curtains of the skin;  
And the heart gives up its dead.

## *Before I knocked*

BEFORE I knocked and flesh let enter,  
With liquid hands tapped on the womb,  
I who was shapeless as the water  
That shaped the Jordan near my home  
Was brother to Mnetha's daughter  
And sister to the fathering worm.

I who was deaf to spring and summer,  
Who knew not sun nor moon by name,  
Felt thud beneath my flesh's armour,  
As yet was in a molten form,  
The leaden stars, the rainy hammer  
Swung by my father from his dome

I knew the message of the winter,  
The darted hail, the childish snow,  
And the wind was my sister suitor,  
Wind in me leaped, the hellborn dew,  
My veins flowed with the Eastern weather;  
Ungotten I knew night and day.

As yet ungotten, I did suffer,  
The rack of dreams my lily bones  
Did twist into a living cipher,  
And flesh was snipped to cross the lines  
Of gallow crosses on the liver  
And brambles in the wringing brains

My throat knew thirst before the structure  
Of skin and vein around the well  
Where words and water make a mixture  
Unfailing till the blood runs foul;  
My heart knew love, my belly hunger;  
I smelt the maggot in my stool.

And time cast forth my mortal creature  
To drift or drown upon the seas  
Acquainted with the salt adventure  
Of tides that never touch the shores.  
I who was rich was made the richer  
By sipping at the vine of days

I, born of flesh and ghost, was neither  
A ghost nor man, but mortal ghost  
And I was struck down by death's feather.  
I was a mortal to the last  
Long breath that carried to my father  
The message of his dying christ.

You who bow down at cross and altar,  
Remember me and pity Him  
Who took my flesh and bone for armour  
And doublecrossed my mother's womb.

*The force that through the green fuse drives the  
flower*

THE force that through the green fuse drives the flower  
Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees  
Is my destroyer.  
And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose  
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.

The force that drives the water through the rocks  
Drives my red blood, that dries the mouthing streams  
Turns mine to wax  
And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins  
How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks.

The hand that whirls the water in the pool  
Stirs the quicksand, that ropes the blowing wind  
Hauls my shroud sail  
And I am dumb to tell the hanging man  
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.

The lips of time leech to the fountain head;  
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood  
Shall calm her sores.  
And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind  
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb  
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm

*My hero bares his nerves*

MY HERO bares his nerves along my wrist  
That rules from wrist to shoulder,  
Unpacks the head that, like a sleepy ghost,  
Leans on my mortal ruler,  
The proud spine spurning turn and twist

And these poor nerves so wired to the skull  
Ache on the lovelorn paper  
I hug to love with my unruly scrawl  
That utters all love hunger  
And tells the page the empty ill.

My hero bares my side and sees his heart  
Tread, like a naked Venus,  
The beach of flesh, and wind her bloodred plait,  
Stripping my loin of promise,  
He promises a secret heat.

He holds the wire from this box of nerves  
Praising the mortal error  
Of birth and death, the two sad knaves of thieves,  
And the hunger's emperor,  
He pulls the chain, the cistern moves.

*Where once the waters of your face*

WHERE once the waters of your face  
Spun to my screws, your dry ghost blows,  
The dead turns up its eye;  
Where once the mermen through your ice  
Pushed up their hair, the dry wind steers  
Through salt and root and roe.

Where once your green knots sank their splice  
Into the tided cord, there goes  
The green unraveller,  
His scissors oiled, his knife hung loose  
To cut the channels at their source  
And lay the wet fruits low.

Invisible, your clocking tides  
Break on the lovebeds of the weeds;  
The weed of love's left dry;  
There round about your stones the shades  
Of children go who, from their voids,  
Cry to the dolphuned sea.

Dry as a tomb, your coloured lids  
Shall not be latched while magic glides  
Sage on the earth and sky;  
There shall be corals in your beds,  
There shall be serpents in your tides,  
Till all our sea-faiths die.



*If I were tickled by the rub of love*

IF I WERE tickled by the rub of love,  
A rooking girl who stole me for her side,  
Broke through her straws, breaking my bandaged string,  
If the red tickle as the cattle calve  
Still set to scratch a laughter from my lung,  
I would not fear the apple nor the flood  
Nor the bad blood of spring.

Shall it be male or female? say the cells,  
And drop the plum like fire from the flesh  
If I were tickled by the hatching hair,  
The winging bone that sprouted in the heels,  
The itch of man upon the baby's thigh,  
I would not fear the gallows nor the axe  
Nor the crossed sticks of war

Shall it be male or female? say the fingers  
That chalk the walls with green girls and their men.  
I would not fear the muscling-in of love  
If I were tickled by the urchin hungers  
Rehearsing heat upon a raw-edged nerve.  
I would not fear the devil in the loin  
Nor the outspoken grave.

If I were tickled by the lovers' rub  
That wipes away not crow's-foot nor the lock  
Of sick old manhood on the fallen jaws,  
Time and the crabs and the sweethearting crib  
Would leave me cold as butter for the flies,  
The sea of scums could drown me as it broke  
Dead on the sweethearts' toes.

This world is half the devil's and my own,  
Daft with the drug that's smoking in a girl  
And curling round the bud that forks her eye.  
An old man's shank one-marrowed with my bone,  
And all the herrings smelling in the sea,  
I sit and watch the worm beneath my nail  
Wearing the quick away.

And that's the rub, the only rub that tickles  
The knobbly ape that swings along his sex  
From damp love-darkness and the nurse's twist  
Can never raise the midnight of a chuckle,  
Nor when he finds a beauty in the breast  
Of lover, mother, lovers, or his six  
Feet in the rubbing dust.

And what's the rub? Death's feather on the nerve?  
Your mouth, my love, the thistle in the kiss?  
My Jack of Christ born thorny on the tree?  
The words of death are dryer than his stiff,  
My wordy wounds are printed with your hair  
I would be tickled by the rub that is  
Man be my metaphor.

## *Our eunuch dreams*

### I

OUR eunuch dreams, all seedless in the light,  
Of light and love, the tempers of the heart,  
Whack their boys' limbs,  
And, winding-footed in their shawl and sheet,  
Groom the dark brides, the widows of the night  
Fold in their arms.

The shades of girls, all flavoured from their shrouds,  
When sunlight goes are sundered from the worm,  
The bones of men, the broken in their beds,  
By midnight pulleys that unhouse the tomb.

### II

In this our age the gunman and his moll,  
Two one-dimensioned ghosts, love on a reel,  
Strange to our solid eye,  
And speak their midnight nothings as they swell,  
When cameras shut they hurry to their hole  
Down in the yard of day.

They dance between their arclamps and our skull,  
Impose their shots, throwing the nights away,  
We watch the show of shadows kiss or kill,  
Flavoured of celluloid give love the lie.

III

Which is the world? Of our two sleepings, which  
 Shall fall awake when cures and their itch  
 Raise up this red-eyed earth?  
 Pack off the shapes of daylight and their starch,  
 The sunny gentlemen, the Welshing rich,  
 Or drive the night-gear'd forth.

The photograph is married to the eye,  
 Grafts on its bride one-sided skins of truth;  
 The dream has sucked the sleeper of his faith  
 That shrouded men might marrow as they fly.

IV

This is the world the lying likeness of  
 Our strips of stuff that tatter as we move  
 Loving and being loth;  
 The dream that kicks the buried from their sack  
 And lets their trash be honoured as the quick.  
 This is the world. Have faith.

For we shall be a shouter like the cock,  
 Blowing the old dead back; our shots shall smack  
 The image from the plates;  
 And we shall be fit fellows for a life,  
 And who remain shall flower as they love,  
 Praise to our faring hearts.

*Especially when the October wind*

ESPECIALLY when the October wind  
With frosty fingers punishes my hair,  
Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire  
And cast a shadow crab upon the land,  
By the sea's side, hearing the noise of birds,  
Hearing the raven cough in winter sticks,  
My busy heart who shudders as she talks  
Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words.

Shut, too, in a tower of words, I mark  
On the horizon walking like the trees  
The wordy shapes of women, and the rows  
Of the star-gestured children in the park.  
Some let me make you of the vowelled beeches,  
Some of the oaken voices, from the roots  
Of many a thorny shire tell you notes,  
Some let me make you of the water's speeches

Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock  
Tells me the hour's word, the neural meaning  
Flies on the shafted disk, declaims the morning  
And tells the windy weather in the cock.  
Some let me make you of the meadow's signs,  
The signal grass that tells me all I know  
Breaks with the wormy winter through the eye.  
Some let me tell you of the raven's sins.

Especially when the October wind  
(Some let me make you of autumnal spells,  
The spider-tongued, and the loud hill of Wales)  
With fists of turnips punishes the land,  
Some let me make you of the heartless words.  
The heart is drained that, spelling in the scurry  
Of chemic blood, warned of the coming fury  
By the sea's side hear the dark-vowelled birds.



Time is a foolish fancy, time and fool.  
No, no, you lover skull, descending hammer  
Descends, my masters, on the entered honour.  
You hero skull, Cadaver in the hangar  
Tells the stick, 'fail.'

Joy is no knocking nation, sir and madam,  
The cancer's fusion, or the summer feather  
Lit on the cuddled tree, the cross of fever,  
Nor city tar and subway bored to foster  
Man through macadam.

I damp the waxlights in your tower dome  
Joy is the knock of dust, Cadaver's shoot  
Of bud of Adam through his boxy shift,  
Love's twilight nation and the skull of state,  
Sir, is your doom

Everything ends, the tower ending and,  
(Have with the house of wind), the leaning scene,  
Ball of the foot depending from the sun,  
(Give, summer, over), the cemented skin,  
The actions' end

All, men my madmen, the unwholesome wind  
With whistler's cough contagions, time on track  
Shapes in a cinder death, love for his trick,  
Happy Cadaver's hunger as you take  
The kissproof world.



*From love's first fever to her plague*

FROM love's first fever to her plague, from the soft second  
And to the hollow minute of the womb,  
From the unfolding to the scissored caul,  
The time for breast and the green apron age  
When no mouth stirred about the hanging famine,  
All world was one, one windy nothing,  
My world was christened in a stream of milk.  
And earth and sky were as one airy hill,  
The sun and moon shed one white light.

From the first print of the unshodden foot, the lifting  
Hand, the breaking of the hair,  
From the first secret of the heart, the warning ghost,  
And to the first dumb wonder at the flesh,  
The sun was red, the moon was grey,  
The earth and sky were as two mountains meeting

The body prospered, teeth in the marrowed gums,  
The growing bones, the rumour of manseed  
Within the hallowed gland, blood blessed the heart,  
And the four winds, that had long blown as one,  
Shone in my ears the light of sound,  
Called in my eyes the sound of light.  
And yellow was the multiplying sand,  
Each golden grain spat life into its fellow,  
Green was the singing house.

The plum my mother picked matured slowly,  
The boy she dropped from darkness at her side  
Into the sided lap of light grew strong,  
Was muscled, matted, wise to the crying thigh  
And to the voice that, like a voice of hunger,  
Itched in the noise of wind and sun

And from the first declension of the flesh  
I learnt man's tongue, to twist the shapes of thoughts  
Into the stony idiom of the brain,  
To shade and knit anew the patch of words  
Left by the dead who, in their moonless acre,  
Need no word's warmth  
The root of tongues ends in a spentout cancer,  
That but a name, where maggots have their X.

I learnt the verbs of will, and had my secret;  
The code of night tapped on my tongue;  
What had been one was many sounding minded.

One womb, one mind, spewed out the matter,  
One breast gave suck the fever's issue,  
From the divorcing sky I learnt the double,  
The two-framed globe that spun into a score;  
A million minds gave suck to such a bud  
As forks my eye,  
Youth did condense; the tears of spring  
Dissolved in summer and the hundred seasons;  
One sun, one manna, warmed and fed.

## *In the beginning*

IN THE beginning was the three-pointed star,  
One smile of light across the empty face,  
One bough of bone across the rooting air,  
The substance forked that marrowed the first sun,  
And, burning ciphers on the round of space,  
Heaven and hell mixed as they spun.

In the beginning was the pale signature,  
Three-syllabled and starry as the smile;  
And after came the imprints on the water,  
Stamp of the minted face upon the moon,  
The blood that touched the crosstree and the grail  
Touched the first cloud and left a sign.

In the beginning was the mounting fire  
That set alight the weathers from a spark,  
A three-eyed, red-eyed spark, blunt as a flower;  
Life rose and spouted from the rolling seas,  
Burst in the roots, pumped from the earth and rock  
The secret oils that drive the grass.

In the beginning was the word, the word  
That from the solid bases of the light  
Abstracted all the letters of the void;  
And from the cloudy bases of the breath  
The word flowed up, translating to the heart  
First characters of birth and death.

in the beginning was the secret brain  
The brain was celled and soldered in the thought  
Before the pitch was forking to a sun,  
Before the veins were shaking in their sieve,  
Blood shot and scattered to the winds of light  
The ribbed original of love.

*Light breaks where no sun shines*

LIGHT breaks where no sun shines;  
Where no sea runs, the waters of the heart  
Push in their tides,  
And, broken ghosts with glow-worms in their heads,  
The things of light  
File through the flesh where no flesh decks the bones

A candle in the thighs  
Warms youth and seed and burns the seeds of age;  
Where no seed stirs,  
The fruit of man unwrinkles in the stars,  
Bright as a fig;  
Where no wax is, the candle shows its hairs.

Dawn breaks behind the eyes;  
From poles of skull and toe the windy blood  
Slides like a sea,  
Nor fenced, nor staked, the gushers of the sky  
Spout to the rod  
Divining in a smile the oil of tears.

Night in the sockets rounds,  
Like some pitch moon, the limit of the globes;  
Day lights the bone,  
Where no cold is, the skinning gales unpin  
The winter's robes;  
The film of spring is hanging from the lids.

Light breaks on secret lots,  
On tips of thought where thoughts smell in the rain,  
When logics die,  
The secret of the soil grows through the eye,  
And blood jumps in the sun,  
Above the waste allotments the dawn halts

## *I followed sleep*

I FELLOWED sleep who kissed me in the brain,  
Let fall the tear of time, the sleeper's eye,  
Shifting to light, turned on me like a moon.  
So, planing-heeled, I flew along my man  
And dropped on dreaming and the upward sky.

I fled the earth and, naked, climbed the weather,  
Reaching a second ground far from the stars,  
And there we wept, I and a ghostly other,  
My mothers-eyed, upon the tops of trees,  
I fled that ground as lightly as a feather.

'My fathers' globe knocks on its nave and sings '  
'This that we tread was, too, your fathers' land.'  
'But this we tread bears the angelic gangs,  
Sweet are their fathered faces in their wings  
'These are but dreaming men. Breathe, and they fade.'

Faded my elbow ghost, the mothers-eyed,  
As, blowing on the angels, I was lost  
On that cloud coast to each grave-gabbing shade;  
I blew the dreaming fellows to their bed  
Where still they sleep unknowing of their ghost.

Then all the matter of the living air  
Raised up a voice, and, climbing on the words,  
I spelt my vision with a hand and hair,  
How light the sleeping on this soily star,  
How deep the waking in the worlded clouds.

There grows the hours' ladder to the sun,  
Each rung a love or losing to the last,  
The inches monkeyed by the blood of man  
An old, mad man still climbing in his ghost,  
My fathers' ghost is climbing in the rain.



## *I dreamed my genesis*

I DREAMED my genesis in sweat of sleep, breaking  
Through the rotating shell, strong  
As motor muscle on the drill, driving  
Through vision and the girdered nerve.

From limbs that had the measure of the worm, shuffled  
Off from the creasing flesh, filed  
Through all the irons in the grass, metal  
Of suns in the man-melting night.

Heir to the scalding veins that hold love's drop, costly  
A creature in my bones I  
Rounded my globe of heritage, journey  
In bottom gear through night-gear'd man.

I dreamed my genesis and died again, shrapnel  
Rammed in the marching heart, hole  
In the stitched wound and clotted wind, muzzled  
Death on the mouth that ate the gas.

Sharp in my second death I marked the hills, harvest  
Of hemlock and the blades, rust  
My blood upon the tempered dead, forcing  
My second struggling from the grass.

And power was contagious in my birth, second  
Rise of the skeleton and  
Rerobing of the naked ghost. Manhood  
Spat up from the resuffered pain.

I dreamed my genesis in sweat of death, fallen  
Twice in the feeding sea, grown  
Stale of Adam's brine until, vision  
Of new man strength, I seek the sun.

## *My world is pyramid*

### I

HALF of the fellow father as he doubles  
His sea-sucked Adam in the hollow hulk,  
Half of the fellow mother as she dabbles  
To-morrow's diver in her horny milk,  
Bisected shadows on the thunder's bone  
Bolt for the salt unborn.

The fellow half was frozen as it bubbled  
Corrosive spring out of the iceberg's crop,  
The fellow seed and shadow as it babbled  
The swang of milk was tufted in the pap,  
For half of love was planted in the lost,  
And the unplanted ghost.

The broken halves are fellowed in a cripple,  
The crutch that marrow taps upon their sleep,  
Limp in the street of sea, among the rabble  
Of tide-tongued heads and bladders in the deep,  
And stake the sleepers in the savage grave  
That the vampire laugh.

The patchwork halves were cloven as they scudded  
The wild pigs' wood, and slime upon the trees,  
Sucking the dark, kissed on the cyanide,  
And loosed the braiding adders from their hairs;  
Rotating halves are horning as they drill  
The arterial angel.

What colour is glory? death's feather? tremble  
The halves that pierce the pin's point in the air,  
And prick the thumb-stained heaven through the thimble.  
The ghost is dumb that stammered in the straw,  
The ghost that hatched his havoc as he flew  
Blinds their cloud-tracking eye.

II

My world is pyramid    The padded mummer  
Weeps on the desert ochre and the salt  
Incising summer.  
My Egypt's armour buckling in its sheet,  
I scrape through resin to a starry bone  
And a blood parhelion.

My world is cypress, and an English valley  
I piece my flesh that rattled on the yards  
Red in an Austrian volley.  
I hear, through dead men's drums, the riddled lads,  
Strewing their bowels from a hill of bones,  
Cry Eloï to the guns

My grave is watered by the crossing Jordan.  
The Arctic scut, and basin of the South,  
Drip on my dead house garden  
Who seek me landward, marking in my mouth  
The straws of Asia, lose me as I turn  
Through the Atlantic corn.

The fellow halves that, cloven as they swivel  
On casting tides, are tangled in the shells,  
Bearding the unborn devil,  
Bleed from my burning fork and smell my heels.  
The tongues of heaven gossip as I glide  
Binding my angel's hood

Who blows death's feather? ¿What glory is colour?  
I blow the stammel feather in the vein.  
The loin is glory in a working pallor.  
My clay unsuckled and my salt unborn,  
The secret child, I shift about the sea  
Dry in the half-tracked thigh.

*All all and all the dry worlds lever*

I

ALL ALL and all the dry worlds lever,  
Stage of the ice, the solid ocean,  
All from the oil, the pound of lava.  
City of spring, the governed flower,  
Turns in the earth that turns the ashen  
Towns around on a wheel of fire.

How now my flesh, my naked fellow,  
Dug of the sea, the glanded morrow,  
Worm in the scalp, the staked and fallow.  
All all and all, the corpse's lover,  
Skinny as sin, the foaming marrow,  
All of the flesh, the dry worlds lever.

II

Fear not the working world, my mortal,  
Fear not the flat, synthetic blood,  
Nor the heart in the ribbing metal.  
Fear not the tread, the seeded milling,  
The trigger and scythe, the bridal blade,  
Nor the flint in the lover's mauling.

Man of my flesh, the jawbone riven,  
Know now the flesh's lock and vice,  
And the cage for the scythe-eyed raven.  
Know, O my bone, the jointed lever,  
Fear not the screws that turn the voice,  
And the face to the driven lover.

### III

All all and all the dry worlds couple,  
Ghost with her ghost, contagious man  
With the womb of his shapeless people  
All that shapes from the caul and suckle,  
Stroke of mechanical flesh on mine,  
Square in these worlds the mortal circle.

Flower, flower the people's fusion,  
O light in zenith, the coupled bud,  
And the flame in the flesh's vision.  
Out of the sea, the drive of oil,  
Socket and grave, the brassy blood,  
Flower, flower, all all and all

*I, in my intricate image*

I

I, IN MY intricate image, stride on two levels,  
Forged in man's minerals, the brassy orator  
Laying my ghost in metal,  
The scales of this twin world tread on the double,  
My half ghost in armour hold hard in death's corridor,  
To my man-iron side.

Beginning with doom in the bulb, the spring unravels,  
Bright as her spinning-wheels, the colic season  
Worked on a world of petals,  
She threads off the sap and needles, blood and bubble  
Casts to the pine roots, raising man like a mountain  
Out of the naked entail.

Beginning with doom in the ghost, and the springing marvels,  
Image of images, my metal phantom  
Forcing forth through the harebell,  
My man of leaves and the bronze root, mortal, immortal,  
I, in my fusion of rose and male motion,  
Create this twin miracle

This is the fortune of manhood the natural peril,  
A steeplejack tower, bonerailed and masterless,  
No death more natural;  
Thus the shadowless man or ox, and the pictured devil.  
In seizure of silence commit the dead nuisance:  
The natural parallel.



My images stalk the trees and the slant sap's tunnel,  
No tread more perilous, the green steps and spire  
Mount on man's footfall,  
I with the wooden insect in the tree of nettles,  
In the glass bed of grapes with snail and flower,  
Hearing the weather fall

Intricate manhood of ending, the invalid rivals,  
Voyaging clockwise off the symbolised harbour,  
Finding the water final,  
On the consumptives' terrace taking their two farewells,  
Sail on the level, the departing adventure,  
To the sea-blown arrival.

## II

They climb the country pinnacle,  
Twelve winds encounter by the white host at pasture,  
Corner the mounted meadows in the hill corral,  
They see the squirrel stumble,  
The haring snail go giddily round the flower,  
A quarrel of weathers and trees in the windy spiral.

As they dive, the dust settles,  
The cadaverous gravels, falls thick and steadily,  
The highroad of water where the seabear and mackerel  
Turn the long sea arterial  
Turning a petrol face blind to the enemy  
Turning the riderless dead by the channel wall

(Death instrumental,  
Splitting the long eye open, and the spiral turnkey,  
Your corkscrew grave centred in navel and nipple,

The neck of the nostril,  
Under the mask and the ether, they making bloody  
The tray of knives, the antiseptic funeral;

Bring out the black patrol,  
Your monstrous officers and the decaying army,  
The sexton sentinel, garrisoned under thistles,  
A cock-on-a-dunghill  
Crowing to Lazarus the morning is vanity,  
Dust be your saviour under the conjured soil )

As they drown, the chime travels,  
Sweetly the diver's bell in the steeple of spindrift  
Rings out the Dead Sea scale;  
And, clapped in water till the triton dangles,  
Strung by the flaxen whale-weed, from the hangman's raft,  
Hear they the salt glass breakers and the tongues of burial

(Turn the sea-spindle lateral,  
The grooved land rotating, that the stylus of lightning  
Dazzle this face of voices on the moon-turned table,  
Let the wax disk babble  
Shames and the damp dishonours, the relic scraping.  
These are your years' recorders. The circular world stands  
still )

### III

They suffer the undead water where the turtle nibbles,  
Come unto sea-stuck towers, at the fibre scaling,  
The flight of the carnal skull  
And the cell-stepped thimble;  
Suffer, my topsy-turvies, that a double angel  
Sprout from the stony lockers like a tree on Aran.

Be by your one ghost pierced, his pointed ferrule,  
Brass and the bodiless image, on a stick of folly  
Star-set at Jacob's angle,  
Smoke hill and hophead's valley,  
And the five-fathomed Hamlet on his father's coral,  
Thrusting the tom-thumb vision up the iron mile

Suffer the slash of vision by the fin-green stubble,  
Be by the ships' sea broken at the manstring anchored  
The stoved bones' voyage downward  
In the shipwreck of muscle;  
Give over, lovers, locking, and the seawax struggle,  
Love like a mist or fire through the bed of eels.

And in the pincers of the boiling circle,  
The sea and instrument, nicked in the locks of time,  
My great blood's iron single  
In the pouring town,  
I, in a wind on fire, from green Adam's cradle,  
No man more magical, clawed out the crocodile

Man was the scales, the death birds on enamel,  
Tail, Nile, and snout, a saddler of the rushes,  
Time in the hourless houses  
Shaking the sea-hatched skull,  
And, as for oils and ointments on the flying grail,  
All-hollowed man wept for his white apparel.

Man was Cadaver's masker, the harnessing mantle,  
Windily master of man was the rotten fathom,  
My ghost in his metal neptune  
Forged in man's mineral.  
This was the god of beginning in the intricate seawhirl,  
And my images roared and rose on heaven's hill.

*This bread I break*

THIS bread I break was once the oat,  
This wine upon a foreign tree  
Plunged in its fruit;  
Man in the day or wind at night  
Laid the crops low, broke the grape's joy.

Once in this wine the summer blood  
Knocked in the flesh that decked the vine,  
Once in this bread  
The oat was merry in the wind;  
Man broke the sun, pulled the wind down.

This flesh you break, this blood you, let  
Make desolation in the vein,  
Were oat and grape  
Born of the sensual root and sap;  
My wine you drink, my bread you snap.

### *Incarnate devil*

INCARNATE devil in a talking snake,  
The central plains of Asia in his garden,  
In shaping-time the circle stung awake,  
In shapes of sin forked out the bearded apple,  
And God walked there who was a fiddling warden  
And played down pardon from the heavens' hill.

When we were strangers to the guided seas,  
A handmade moon half holy in a cloud,  
The wisemen tell me that the garden gods  
Twined good and evil on an eastern tree,  
And when the moon rose windily it was  
Black as the beast and paler than the cross.

We in our Eden knew the secret guardian  
In sacred waters that no frost could harden,  
And in the mighty mornings of the earth;  
Hell in a horn of sulphur and the cloven myth,  
All heaven in a midnight of the sun,  
A serpent fiddled in the shaping-time.

## *To-day, this insect*

TO-DAY, this insect, and the world I breathe,  
Now that my symbols have outelbowed space,  
Time at the city spectacles, and half  
The dear, daft time I take to nudge the sentence,  
In trust and tale have I divided sense,  
Slapped down the guillotine, the blood-red double  
Of head and tail made witnesses to this  
Murder of Eden and green genesis.

The insect certain is the plague of fables.

This story's monster has a serpent caul,  
Blind in the coil scrams round the blazing outline,  
Measures his own length on the garden wall  
And breaks his shell in the last shocked beginning,  
A crocodile before the chrysalis,  
Before the fall from love the flying heartbone,  
Winged like a sabbath ass this children's piece  
Uncredited blows Jericho on Eden.

The insect fable is the certain promise.

Death: death of Hamlet and the nightmare madmen,  
An air-drawn windmill on a wooden horse,  
John's beast, Job's patience, and the fibs of vision,  
Greek in the Irish sea the ageless voice:  
'Adam I love, my madmen's love is endless,  
No tell-tale lover has an end more certain,  
All legends' sweethearts on a tree of stories,  
My cross of tales behind the fabulous curtain.'

### *The seed-at-zero*

THE seed-at-zero shall not storm  
That town of ghosts, the trodden womb  
With her rampart to his tapping,  
No god-in-hero tumble down  
Like a tower on the town  
Dumbly and divinely stumbling  
Over the manwaging line

The seed-at-zero shall not storm  
That town of ghosts, the manwaged womb  
With her rampart to his tapping,  
No god-in-hero tumble down  
Like a tower on the town  
Dumbly and divinely leaping  
Over the warbearing line

Through the rampart of the sky  
Shall the star-flanked seed be riddled,  
Manna for the rumbling ground,  
Quickening for the riddled sea,  
Settled on a virgin stronghold  
He shall grapple with the guard  
And the keeper of the key

Through the rampart of the sky  
Shall the star-flanked seed be riddled,  
Manna for the guarded ground,  
Quickening for the virgin sea,  
Settling on a riddled stronghold  
He shall grapple with the guard  
And the loser of the key

May a humble village labour  
And a continent deny?  
A hemisphere may scold him  
And a green inch be his bearer,  
Let the hero seed find harbour,  
Seaports by a drunken shore  
Have their thirsty sailors hide him.

May a humble planet labour  
And a continent deny?  
A village green may scold him  
And a high sphere be his bearer,  
Let the hero seed find harbour,  
Seaports by a thirsty shore  
Have their drunken sailors hide him.

Man-in-seed, in seed-at-zero,  
From the foreign fields of space,  
Shall not thunder on the town  
With a star-flanked garrison,  
Nor the cannons of his kingdom  
Shall the hero-in-tomorrow  
Range on the sky-scraping place.

Man-in-seed, in seed-at-zero,  
From the star-flanked fields of space,  
Thunders on the foreign town  
With a sand-bagged garrison,  
Nor the cannons of his kingdom  
Shall the hero-in-to-morrow  
Range from the grave-groping place.



*Shall gods be said to thump the clouds*

SHALL gods be said to thump the clouds  
When clouds are cursed by thunder,  
Be said to weep when weather howls?  
Shall rainbows be their tunics' colour?

When it is rain where are the gods?  
Shall it be said they sprinkle water  
From garden cans, or free the floods?

Shall it be said that, venuswise,  
An old god's dugs are pressed and pricked,  
The wet night scolds me like a nurse?

It shall be said that gods are stone.  
Shall a dropped stone drum on the ground,  
Flung gravel chime? Let the stones speak  
With tongues that talk all tongues.

*Here in this spring*

HERE in this spring, stars float along the void,  
Here in this ornamental winter  
Down pelts the naked weather;  
This summer buries a spring bird.

Symbols are selected from the years'  
Slow rounding of four seasons' coasts,  
In autumn teach three seasons' fires  
And four birds' notes.

I should tell summer from the trees, the worms  
Tell, if at all, the winter's storms  
Or the funeral of the sun,  
I should learn spring by the cuckooing,  
And the slug should teach me destruction

A worm tells summer better than the clock,  
The slug's a living calendar of days;  
What shall it tell me if a timeless insect  
Says the world wears away?

*Do you not father me*

Do you not father me, nor the erected arm  
For my tall tower's sake cast in her stone?  
Do you not mother me, nor, as I am,  
The lovers' house, lie suffering my stain?  
Do you not sister me, nor the erected crime  
For my tall turrets carry as your sin?  
Do you not brother me, nor, as you climb,  
Adore my windows for their summer scene?

Am I not father, too, and the ascending boy,  
The boy of woman and the wanton starrer  
Marking the flesh and summer in the bay?  
Am I not sister, too, who is my saviour?  
Am I not all of you by the directed sea  
Where bird and shell are babbling in my tower?  
Am I not you who front the tidy shore,  
Nor roof of sand, nor yet the towering tiler?

You are all these, said she who gave me the long suck,  
All these, he said who sacked the children's town,  
Up rose the Abraham-man, mad for my sake,  
They said, who hacked and humoured, they were mine  
I am, the tower told, felled by a timeless stroke,  
Who razed my wooden folly stands aghast,  
For man-begetters in the dry-as-paste,  
The ringed-sea ghost, rise grimly from the wrack.

Do you not father me on the destroying sand?  
You are your sisters' sire, said seaweedy,  
The salt sucked dam and darlings of the land  
Who play the proper gentleman and lady.  
Shall I still be love's house on the widdershin earth,  
Woe to the windy masons at my shelter?  
Love's house, they answer, and the tower death  
Lie all unknowing of the grave sin-eater.

## *Out of the sighs*

OUT OF the sighs a little comes,  
But not of grief, for I have knocked down that  
Before the agony; the spirit grows,  
Forgets, and cries;  
A little comes, is tasted and found good;  
All could not disappoint;  
There must, be praised, some certainty,  
If not of loving well, then not,  
And that is true after perpetual defeat.

After such fighting as the weakest know,  
There's more than dying,  
Lose the great pains or stuff the wound,  
He'll ache too long  
Through no regret of leaving woman waiting  
For her soldier stained with spilt words  
That spill such acrid blood.

Were that enough, enough to ease the pain,  
Feeling regret when this is wasted  
That made me happy in the sun,  
How much was happy while it lasted,  
Were vaguenesses enough and the sweet lies plenty,  
The hollow words could bear all suffering  
And cure me of ills.

Were that enough, bone, blood, and sinew,  
The twisted brain, the fair-formed loin,  
Groping for matter under the dog's plate,  
Man should be cured of distemper.  
For all there is to give I offer:  
Crumbs, barn, and halter.

*Hold hard, these ancient minutes in the cuckoo's  
month*

HOLD hard, these ancient minutes in the cuckoo's month,  
Under the lank, fourth folly on Glamorgan's hill,  
As the green blooms ride upward, to the drive of time,  
Time, in a folly's ride, like a county man  
Over the vault of ridings with his hound at heel,  
Drives forth my men, my children, from the hanging south.

Country, your sport is summer, and December's pools  
By crane and water-tower by the seedy trees  
Lie this fifth month unskated, and the birds have flown;  
Hold hard, my country children in the world of tales,  
The greenwood dying as the deer fall in their tracks,  
This first and steeped season, to the summer's game.

And now the horns of England, in the sound of shape,  
Summon your snowy horsemen, and the four-stringed hill,  
Over the sea-gut loudening, sets a rock alive;  
Hurdles and guns and railings, as the boulders heave,  
Crack like a spring in a vice, bone breaking April,  
Spill the lank folly's hunter and the hard-held hope.

Down fall four padding weathers on the scarlet lands,  
Stalking my children's faces with a tail of blood,  
Time, in a rider rising, from the harnessed valley;  
Hold hard, my county darlings, for a hawk descends,  
Golden Glamorgan straightens, to the falling birds.  
Your sport is summer as the spring runs angrily.

*Was there a time*

WAS there a time when dancers with their fiddles  
In children's circuses could stay their troubles?  
There was a time they could cry over books,  
But time has set its maggot on their track.  
Under the arc of the sky they are unsafe.  
What's never known is safest in this life.  
Under the skysigns they who have no arms  
Have cleanest hands, and, as the heartless ghost  
Alone's unhurt, so the blind man sees best

## *Now*

Now

Say nay,

Man dry man,

Dry lover mine

The deadrock base and blow the flowered anchor,

Should he, for centre sake, hop in the dust,

Forsake, the fool, the hardness of anger.

Now

Say nay,

Sir no say,

Death to the yes,

The yes to death, the yesman and the answer,

Should he who split his children with a cure

Have brotherless his sister on the handsaw.

Now

Say nay,

No say sir

Yea the dead stir,

And this, nor this, is shade, the landed crow,

He lying low with ruin in his ear,

The cockerel's tide upcasting from the fire.

Now

Say nay,

So star fall,

So the ball fail,

So solve the mystic sun, the wife of light,

The sun that leaps on petals through a nought,

The come-a-cropper rider of the flower



Now  
Say nay  
A fig for  
The seal of fire,  
Death hairy-heeled, and the tapped ghost in wood,  
We make me mystic as the arm of air,  
The two-a-vein, the foreskin, and the cloud.

### *Why east wind chills*

WHY EAST wind chills and south wind cools  
Shall not be known till windwell dries  
And west's no longer drowned  
In winds that bring the fruit and rind  
Of many a hundred falls;  
Why silk is soft and the stone wounds  
The child shall question all his days,  
Why night-time rain and the breast's blood  
Both quench his thirst he'll have a black reply.

When cometh Jack Frost? the children ask.  
Shall they clasp a comet in their fists?  
Not till, from high and low, their dust  
Sprinkles in children's eyes a long-last sleep  
And dusk is crowded with the children's ghosts,  
Shall a white answer echo from the rooftops.

All things are known the stars' advice  
Calls some content to travel with the winds,  
Though what the stars ask as they round  
Time upon time the towers of the skies  
Is heard but little till the stars go out.  
I hear content, and 'Be content'  
Ring like a handbell through the corridors,  
And 'Know no answer,' and I know  
No answer to the children's cry  
Of echo's answer and the man of frost  
And ghostly comets over the raised fists.

## *A grief ago*

A GRIEF ago,  
She who was who I hold, the fats and flower,  
Or, water-lammed, from the scythe-sided thorn,  
Hell wind and sea,  
A stem cementing, wrestled up the tower,  
Rose maid and male,  
Or, masted venus, through the paddler's bowl  
Sailed up the sun,

Who is my grief,  
A chrysalis unwrinkling on the iron,  
Wrenched by my fingerman, the leaden bud  
Shot through the leaf,  
Was who was folded on the rod the aaron  
Rose cast to plague,  
The horn and ball of water on the frog  
Housed in the side.

And she who lies,  
Like exodus a chapter from the garden,  
Brand of the lily's anger on her ring,  
Tugged through the days  
Her ropes of heritage, the wars of pardon,  
On field and sand  
The twelve triangles of the cherub wind  
Engraving going.

Who then is she,  
She holding me? The people's sea drives on her,  
Drives out the father from the caesared camp;

The dens of shape  
Shape all her whelps with the long voice of water,  
That she I have,  
The country-handed grave boxed into love,  
Rise before dark.

The night is near,  
A nitric shape that leaps her, time and acid,  
I toll her this before the suncock cast  
Her bone to fire,  
Let her inhale her dead, through seed and solid  
Draw in their seas,  
So cross her hand with their grave gipsy eyes,  
And close her fist

*How soon the servant sun*

How soon the servant sun,  
(Sir morrow mark),  
Can time unriddle, and the cupboard stone,  
(Fog has a bone  
He'll trumpet into meat),  
Unshelve that all my gristles have a gown  
And the naked egg stand straight,  
  
Sir morrow at his sponge,  
(The wound records),  
The nurse of giants by the cut sea basin,  
(Fog by his spring  
Soaks up the sewing tides),  
Tells you and you, my masters, as his strange  
Man morrow blows through food.  
  
All nerves to serve the sun,  
The rite of light,  
A claw I question from the mouse's bone,  
The long-tailed stone  
Trap I with coil and sheet,  
Let the soil squeal I am the biting man  
And the velvet dead inch out.  
  
How soon my level, lord,  
(Sir morrow stamps  
Two heels of water on the floor of seed),  
Shall raise a lamp  
Or spirit up a cloud,  
Erect a walking centre in the shroud,  
Invisible on the stump

A leg as long as trees,  
This inward sir,  
Mister and master, darkness for his eyes,  
The womb-eyed, cries,  
And all sweet hell, deaf as an hour's ear,  
Blasts back the trumpet voice.

*Ears in the turrets hear*

EARS IN the turrets hear  
Hands grumble on the door,  
Eyes in the gables see  
The fingers at the locks.  
Shall I unbolt or stay  
Alone till the day I die  
Unseen by stranger-eyes  
In this white house?  
Hands, hold you poison or grapes?

Beyond this island bound  
~~By~~ a thin sea of flesh  
And a bone coast,  
The land lies out of sound  
And the hills out of mind  
No birds or flying fish  
Disturbs this island's rest

Ears in this island hear  
The wind pass like a fire,  
Eyes in this island see  
Ships anchor off the bay.  
Shall I run to the ships  
With the wind in my hair,  
Or stay till the day I die  
And welcome no sailor?  
Ships, hold you poison or grapes?

Hands grumble on the door,  
Ships anchor off the bay,  
Rain beats the sand and slates.  
Shall I let in the stranger,  
Shall I welcome the sailor,  
Or stay till the day I die?

Hands of the stranger and holds of the ships,  
Hold you poison or grapes?



## *Foster the light*

FOSTER the light nor veil the manshaped moon,  
Nor weather winds that blow not down the bone,  
But strip the twelve-winded marrow from his circle,  
Master the night nor serve the snowman's brain  
That shapes each bushy item of the air  
Into a polestar pointed on an icicle.

Murmur of spring nor crush the cockerel's eggs,  
Nor hammer back a season in the figs,  
But graft these four-fruited ridings on your country,  
Farmer in time of frost the burning leagues,  
By red-eyed orchards sow the seeds of snow,  
In your young years the vegetable century.

And father all nor fail the fly-lord's acre,  
Nor sprout on owl-seed like a goblin-sucker,  
But rail with your wizard's ribs the heart-shaped planet;  
Of mortal voices to the ninnies' choir,  
High lord esquire, speak up the singing cloud,  
And pluck a mandrake music from the marrowroot.

Roll unmanly over this turning tuft,  
O ring of seas, nor sorrow as I shift  
From all my mortal lovers with a starboard smile;  
Nor when my love lies in the cross-boned drift  
Naked among the bow-and-arrow birds  
Shall you turn cockwise on a tufted axle.

Who gave these seas their colour in a shape,  
Shaped my clayfellow, and the heaven's ark  
In time at flood filled with his coloured doubles;  
O who is glory in the shapeless maps,  
Now make the world of me as I have made  
A merry manshape of your walking circle.

*The hand that signed the paper*

THE HAND that signed the paper felled a city,  
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,  
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country;  
These five kings did a king to death.

The mighty hand leads to a sloping shoulder,  
The finger joints are cramped with chalk;  
A goose's quill has put an end to murder  
That put an end to talk.

The hand that signed the treaty bred a fever,  
And famine grew, and locusts came;  
Great is the hand that holds dominion over  
Man by a scribbled name.

The five kings count the dead but do not soften  
The crusted wound nor stroke the brow;  
A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven,  
Hands have no tears to flow.

### *Should lanterns shine*

SHOULD lanterns shine, the holy face,  
Caught in an octagon of unaccustomed light,  
Would wither up, and any boy of love  
Look twice before he fell from grace.  
The features in their private dark  
Are formed of flesh, but let the false day come  
And from her lips the faded pigments fall,  
The mummy cloths expose an ancient breast.

I have been told to reason by the heart,  
But heart, like head, leads helplessly,  
I have been told to reason by the pulse,  
And, when it quickens, alter the actions' pace  
Till field and roof lie level and the same  
So fast I move defying time, the quiet gentleman  
Whose beard wags in Egyptian wind.

I have heard many years of telling,  
And many years should see some change.

The ball I threw while playing in the park  
Has not yet reached the ground.

*I have longed to move away*

I HAVE longed to move away  
From the hissing of the spent lie  
And the old terrors' continual cry  
Growing more terrible as the day  
Goes over the hill into the deep sea;  
I have longed to move away  
From the repetition of salutes,  
For there are ghosts in the air  
And ghostly echoes on paper,  
And the thunder of calls and notes

I have longed to move away but am afraid;  
Some life, yet unspent, might explode  
Out of the old lie burning on the ground,  
And, crackling into the air, leave me half-blind  
Neither by night's ancient fear,  
The parting of hat from hair,  
Pursed lips at the receiver,  
Shall I fall to death's feather  
By these I would not care to die,  
Half convention and half lie

### *Find meat on bones*

'FIND meat on bones that soon have none,  
And drink in the two milked crags,  
The merriest marrow and the dregs  
Before the ladies' breasts are hags  
And the limbs are torn.  
Disturb no winding-sheets, my son,  
But when the ladies are cold as stone  
Then hang a ram rose over the rags.

'Rebel against the binding moon  
And the parliament of sky,  
The kingcrafts of the wicked sea,  
Autocracy of night and day,  
Dictatorship of sun.  
Rebel against the flesh and bone,  
The word of the blood, the wily skin,  
And the maggot no man can slay.'

'The thirst is quenched, the hunger gone,  
And my heart is cracked across,  
My face is haggard in the glass,  
My lips are withered with a kiss,  
My breasts are thin.  
A merry girl took me for man,  
I laid her down and told her sin,  
And put beside her a ram rose.

·The maggot that no man can kill  
And the man no rope can hang  
Rebel against my father's dream  
That out of a bower of red swine  
Howls the foul fiend to heel.  
I cannot murder, like a fool,  
Season and sunshine, grace and girl,  
Nor can I smother the sweet waking.'

Black night still ministers the moon,  
And the sky lays down her laws,  
The sea speaks in a kingly voice,  
Light and dark are no enemies  
But one companion  
'War on the spider and the wren!  
War on the destiny of man!  
Doom on the sun!'  
Before death takes you, O take back this.

## *Grief thief of time*

GRIEF thief of time crawls off,  
The moon-drawn grave, with the seafaring years,  
The knave of pain steals off  
The sea-halved faith that blew time to his knees,  
The old forget the cries,  
Lean time on tide and times the wind stood rough,  
Call back the castaways  
Riding the sea light on a sunken path,  
The old forget the grief,  
Hack of the cūgh, the hanging albatross,  
Cast back the bone of youth  
And salt-eyed stumble bedward where she lies  
Who tossed the high tide in a time of stories  
And timelessly lies loving with the thief.

Now Jack my fathers let the time-faced crook,  
Death flashing from his sleeve,  
With swag of bubbles in a seedy sack  
Sneak down the stallion grave,  
Bull's-eye the outlaw through a eunuch crack  
And free the twin-boxed grief,  
No silver whistles chase him down the weeks'  
Dayed peaks to day to death,  
These stolen bubbles have the bites of snakes  
And the undead eye-teeth,  
No third eye probe into a rainbow's sex  
That bridged the human halves,  
All shall remain and on the graveward gulf  
Shape with my fathers' thieves.



*And death shall have no dominion*

AND death shall have no dominion.  
Dead men naked they shall be one  
With the man in the wind and the west moon;  
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,  
They shall have stars at elbow and foot,  
Though they go mad they shall be sane,  
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;  
Though lovers be lost love shall not,  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
Under the windings of the sea  
They lying long shall not die windily;  
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,  
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break,  
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,  
And the unicorn evils run them through;  
Split all ends up they shan't crack,  
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.  
No more may gulls cry at their ears  
Or waves break loud on the seashores;  
Where blew a flower may a flower no more  
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;  
Though they be mad and dead as nails,  
Heads of the characters hammer through daisies;  
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,  
And death shall have no dominion.

*Then was my neophyte*

THEN WAS my neophyte,  
Child in white blood bent on its knees  
Under the bell of rocks,  
Ducked in the twelve, disciple seas  
The winder of the water-clocks  
Calls a green day and night.  
My sea hermaphrodite,  
Snail of man in His ship of fires  
That burn the bitten decks,  
Knew ~~an~~ His horrible desires  
The climber of the water sex  
Calls the green rock of light.

Who in these labyrinths,  
This tidethread and the lane of scales,  
Twine in a moon-blown shell,  
Escapes to the flat cities' sails  
Furled on the fishes' house and hell,  
Nor falls to His green myths?  
Stretch the salt photographs,  
The landscape grief, love in His oils  
Mirror from man to whale  
That the green child see like a grail  
Through veil and fin and fire and coil  
Time on the canvas paths.

He films my vanity.  
Shot in the wind, by tilted arcs,  
Over the water come  
Children from homes and children's parks

Who speak on a finger and thumb,  
And the masked, headless boy.  
His reels and mystery  
The winder of the clockwise scene  
Wound like a ball of lakes  
Then threw on that tide-hoisted screen  
Love's image till my heartbone breaks  
By a dramatic sea

Who kills my history?  
The year-hedged row is lame with flint,  
Blunt scythe and water blade  
'Who could snap off the shapely's print  
From your to-morrow-treading shade  
With oracle for eye?'  
Time kills me terribly.  
'Time shall not murder you,' He said,  
'Nor the green nought be hurt;  
Who could hack out your unsucked heart,  
O green and unborn and undead?'  
I saw time murder me.

## *Altarwise by owl-light*

### I

ALTARWISE by owl-light in the half-way house  
The gentleman lay graveward with his furies;  
Abaddon in the hangnail cracked from Adam,  
And, from his fork, a dog among the fairies,  
The atlas-eater with a jaw for news,  
Bit out the mandrake with to-morrow's scream.  
Then, penny-eyed, that gentleman of wounds,  
Old cock from nowheres and the heaven's egg,  
With bones unbuttoned to the half-way winds,  
Hatched from the windy salvage on one leg,  
Scraped at my cradle in a walking word  
That night of time under the Christward shelter:  
I am the long world's gentleman, he said,  
And share my bed with Capricorn and Cancer.

### II

Death is all metaphors, shape in one history,  
The child that sucketh long is shooting up,  
The planet-ducted pelican of circles  
Weans on an artery the gender's strip;  
Child of the short spark in a shapeless country  
Soon sets alight a long stick from the cradle;  
The horizontal cross-bones of Abaddon,  
You by the cavern over the black stairs,  
Rung bone and blade, the verticals of Adam,  
And, manned by midnight, Jacob to the stars.

Hairs of your head, then said<sup>2</sup><sub>a</sub> the hollow agent,  
Are but the roots of nettles and of feathers  
Over these groundworks thrusting through a pavement  
And hemlock-headed in the wood of weathers.

### III

First there was the lamb on knocking knees  
And three dead seasons on a climbing grave  
That Adam's wether in the flock of horns,  
Butt of the tree-tailed worm that mounted Eve,  
Horned down with skullfoot and the skull of toes  
On thunderous pavements in the garden time;  
Rip of the vaults, I took my marrow-ladle  
Out of the wrinkled undertaker's van,  
And, Rip Van Winkle from a timeless cradle,  
Dipped me breast-deep in the descended bone;  
The black ram, shuffling of the year, old winter,  
Alone alive among his mutton fold,  
We rung our weathering changes on the ladder,  
Said the antipodes, and twice spring chimed.

### IV

What is the metre of the dictionary?  
The size of genesis? the short spark's gender?  
Shade without shape? the shape of Pharaoh's echo?  
(My shape of age nagging the wounded whisper).

Which sixth of wind blew out the burning gentry?  
(Questions are hunchbacks to the poker marrow).  
What of a bamboo man among your acres?  
Corset the boneyards for a crooked boy?  
Button your bodice on a hump of splinters,  
My camel's eyes will needle through the shroud  
Love's reflection of the mushroom features,  
Stills snapped by night in the bread-sided field,  
Once close-up smiling in the wall of pictures,  
Arc-lamped thrown back upon the cutting flood.

v

And from the windy West came two-gunned Gabriel,  
From Jesu's sleeve trumped up the king of spots,  
The sheath-decked jacks, queen with a shuffled heart,  
Said the fake gentleman in suit of spades,  
Black-tongued and tipsy from salvation's bottle.  
Rose my Byzantine Adam in the night.  
For loss of blood I fell on Ishmael's plain,  
Under the milky mushrooms slew my hunger,  
A climbing sea from Asia had me down  
And Jonah's Moby snatched me by the hair,  
Cross-stroked salt Adam to the frozen angel  
Pin-legged on pole-hills with a black medusa  
By waste seas where the white bear quoted Virgil  
And sirens singing from our lady's sea-straw.

## VI

Cartoon of slashes on the tide-traced crater,  
 He in a book of water tallow-eyed  
 By lava's light split through the oyster vowels  
 And burned sea silence on a wick of words.  
 Pluck, cock, my sea eye, said medusa's scripture,  
 Lop, love, my fork tongue, said the pin-hilled nettle,  
 And love plucked out the stinging siren's eye,  
 Old cock from nowheres lopped the minstrel tongue  
 Till tallow I blew from the wax's tower  
 The fats of midnight when the salt was singing;  
 Adam, time's joker, on a witch of cardboard  
 Spelt out the seven seas, an evil index,  
 The bagpipe-breasted ladies in the deadweed  
 Blew out the blood gauze through the wound of manwax

## VII

Now stamp the Lord's Prayer on a grain of rice,  
 A Bible-leaved of all the written woods  
 Strip to this tree: a rocking alphabet,  
 Genesis in the root, the scarecrow word,  
 And one light's language in the book of trees  
 Doom on deniers at the wind-turned statement.  
 Time's tune my ladies with the teats of music,  
 The scaled sea-sawers, fix in a naked sponge  
 Who sucks the bell-voiced Adam out of magic,  
 Time, milk, and magic, from the world beginning.

Time is the tune my ladies lend their heartbreak,  
From bald pavilions and the house of bread  
Time tracks the sound of shape on man and cloud,  
On rose and icicle the ringing handprint.

VIII

This was the crucifixion on the mountain,  
Time's nerve in vinegar, the gallow grave  
As tarred with blood as the bright thorns I wept;  
The world's my wound, God's Mary in her grief,  
Bent like three trees and bird-papped through her shift,  
With pins for teardrops is the long wound's woman.  
This was the sky, Jack Christ, each minstrel angle  
Drove in the heaven-driven of the nails  
Till the three-coloured rainbow from my nipples  
From pole to pole leapt round the snail-waked world  
I by the tree of thieves, all glory's sawbones,  
Unsex the skeleton this mountain minute,  
And by this blowclock witness of the sun  
Suffer the heaven's children through my heartbeat

IX

From the oracular archives and the parchment,  
Prophets and fibre kings in oil and letter,  
The lamped calligrapher, the queen in splints,  
Buckle to lint and cloth their natron footsteps,  
Draw on the glove of prints, dead Cairo's henna  
Pour like a halo on the caps and serpents.



This was the resurrection in the desert,  
Death from a bandage, rants the mask of scholars  
Gold on such features, and the linen spirit  
Weds my long gentleman to dusts and furies;  
With priest and pharaoh bed my gentle wound,  
World in the sand, on the triangle landscape,  
With stones of odyssey for ash and garland  
And rivers of the dead around my neck

x

Let the tale's sailor from a Christian voyage  
Atlaswise hold half-way off the dummy bay  
Time's ship-racked gospel on the globe I balance:  
So shall winged harbours through the rockbirds' eyes  
Spot the blown word, and on the seas I image  
December's thorn screwed in a brow of holly.  
Let the first Peter from a rainbow's quayrail  
Ask the tall fish swept from the bible east,  
What rhubarb man peeled in her foam-blue channel  
Has sown a flying garden round that sea-ghost?  
Green as beginning, let the garden diving  
Soar, with its two bark towers, to that Day  
When the worm builds with the gold straws of venom  
My nest of mercies in the rude, red tree.

*Because the pleasure-bird whistles*

BECAUSE the pleasure-bird whistles after the hot wires,  
Shall the blind horse sing sweeter?  
Convenient bird and beast lie lodged to suffer  
The supper and knives of a mood.  
In the snuffed and poured snow on the tip of the tongue of the  
year  
That clouts the spittle like bubbles with broken rooms,  
An enamoured man alone by the twigs of his eyes, two fires,  
Camped in the drug-white shower of nerves and food,  
Savours the lick of the times through a deadly wood of hair  
In a wind that plucked a goose,  
Nor ever, as the wild tongue breaks its tombs,  
Rounds to look at the red, wagged root.  
Because there stands, one story out of the bum city,  
That frozen wife whose juices drift like a fixed sea  
Secretly in statuary,  
Shall I, struck on the hot and rocking street,  
Not spin to stare at an old year  
Toppling and burning in the muddle of towers and galleries  
Like the mauled pictures of boys?  
The salt person and blasted place  
I furnish with the meat of a fable;  
If the dead starve, their stomachs turn to tumble  
An upright man in the antipodes  
Or spray-based and rock-chested sea.  
Over the past table I repeat this present grace

*I make this in 'a warring absence*

I MAKE this in a warring absence when  
Each ancient, stone-necked minute of love's season  
Harbours my anchored tongue, slips the quaystone,  
When, praise is blessed, her pride in mast and fountain  
Sailed and set dazzling by the handshaped ocean,  
In that proud sailing tree with branches driven  
Through the last vault and vegetable groyne,  
And this weak house to marrow-columned heaven,

Is corner-cast, breath's rag, scrawled weed, a vain  
And opium head, crow stalk, puffed, cut, and blown,  
Or like the tide-looped breastknot reefed again  
Or rent ancestrally the roped sea-hymen,  
And, pride is last, is like a child alone  
By magnet winds to her blind mother drawn,  
Bread and milk mansion in a toothless town.

She makes for me a nettle's innocence  
And a silk pigeon's guilt in her proud absence,  
In the molested rocks the shell of virgins,  
The frank, closed pearl, the sea-girls' lineaments  
Glint in the staved and siren-printed caverns,  
Is maiden in the shameful oak, omens  
Whalebed and bulldance, the gold bush of lions,  
Proud as a sucked stone and huge as sandgrains.

These are her contraries: the beast who follows  
With priest's grave foot and hand of five assassins  
Her molten flight up cinder-nesting columns,

Calls the starved fire herd, is cast in ice,  
Lost in a limp-treed and uneating silence,  
Who scales a hailing hill in her cold flintsteps  
Falls on a ring of summers and locked noons.

I make a weapon of an ass's skeleton  
And walk the warring sands by the dead town,  
Cudgel great air, wreck east, and topple sundown,  
Storm her sped heart, hang with beheaded veins  
Its wringing shell, and let her eyelids fasten.  
Destruction, picked by birds, brays through the jaw-bone,

And, for that murder's sake, dark with contagion  
Like an approaching wave I sprawl to ruin.  
Ruin, the room of errors, one rood dropped  
Down the stacked sea and water-pillared shade,  
Weighed in rock shroud, is my proud pyramid,  
Where, wound in emerald linen and sharp wind,  
The hero's head lies scraped of every legend,  
Comes love's anatomist with sun-gloved hand  
Who picks the live heart on a diamond.

'His mother's womb had a tongue that lapped up mud,'  
Cried the topless, inchtaped lips from hank and hood  
In that bright anchorground where I lay lined,  
'A lizard darting with black venom's thread  
Doubled, to fork him back, through the lockjaw bed  
And the breath-white, curtained mouth of seed '  
'See,' drummed the taut masks, 'how the dead ascend.'  
In the groin's endless coil a man is tangled '

These once-blind eyes have breathed a wind of visions,  
The cauldron's root through this once-rindless hand  
Fumed like a tree, and tossed a burning bird;  
With loud, torn tooth and tail and cobweb drum  
The crumpled packs fled past this ghost in bloom,  
And, mild as pardon from a cloud of pride,  
The terrible world my brother bares his skin.

Now in the cloud's big breast lie quiet countries,  
Delivered seas my love from her proud place  
Walks with no wound, nor lightning in her face,  
A calm wind blows that raised the trees like hair  
Once where the soft snow's blood was turned to ice.  
And though my love pulls the pale, nipped air,  
Prides of to-morrow suckling in her eyes,  
Yet this I make in a forgiving presence.

*When all my five and country senses see*

WHEN ALL my five and country senses see,  
The fingers will forget green thumbs and mark  
How, through the halfmoon's vegetable eye,  
Husk of young stars and handfull zodiac,  
Love in the frost is pared and wintered by,  
The whispering ears will watch love drummed away  
Down breeze and shell to a discordant beach,  
And, lashed to syllables, the lynx tongue cry  
That her fond wounds are mended bitterly.  
My nostrils see her breath burn like a bush.

My one and noble heart has witnesses  
In all love's countries, that will grope awake;  
And when blind sleep drops on the spying senses,  
The heart is sensual, though five eyes break.

*We lying by seasand*

WE LYING by seasand, watching yellow  
And the grave sea, mock who deride  
Who follow the red rivers, hollow  
Alcove of words out of cicada shade,  
For in this yellow grave of sand and sea  
A calling for colour calls with the wind  
That's grave and gay as grave and sea  
Sleeping on either hand.  
The lunar silences, the silent tide  
Lapping the still canals, the dry tide-master  
Ribbed between desert and water storm,  
Should cure our ills of the water  
With a one-coloured calm;  
The heavenly music over the sand  
Sounds with the grains as they hurry  
Hiding the golden mountains and mansions  
Of the grave, gay, seaside land.  
Bound by a sovereign strip, we lie,  
Watch yellow, wish for wind to blow away  
The strata of the shore and drown red rock,  
But wishes breed not, neither  
Can we fend off rock arrival,  
Lie watching yellow until the golden weather  
Breaks, O my heart's blood, like a heart and hill.

*It is the sinners' dust-tongued bell*

IT IS THE sinners' dust-tongued bell claps me to churches  
When, with his torch and hourglass, like a sulphur priest,  
His beast heel cleft in a sandal,  
Time marks a black aisle kindle from the brand of ashes,  
Grief with dishevelled hands tear out the altar ghost  
And a firewind kill the candle

Over the choir minute I hear the hour chant:  
Time's coral saint and the salt grief drown a foul sepulchre  
And a whirlpool drives the prayerwheel,  
Moonfall and sailing emperor, pale as their tide-print,  
Hear by death's accident the clocked and dashed-down spire  
Strike the sea hour through bellmetal

There is loud and dark directly under the dumb flame,  
Storm, snow, and fountain in the weather of fireworks,  
Cathedral calm in the pulled house;  
Grief with drenched book and candle christens the cherub  
time  
From the emerald, still bell, and from the pacing weather-  
cock  
The voice of bird on coral prays

Forever it is a white child in the dark-skinned summer  
Out of the font of bone and plants at that stone tocsin  
Scales the blue wall of spirits;  
From blank and leaking winter sails the child in colour,  
Shakes, in crabbed burial shawl, by sorcerer's insect woken,  
Ding dong from the mute turrets



I mean by time the cast and curfew rascal of our marriage,  
At nightbreak born in the fat side, from an animal bed  
In a holy room in a wave;  
And all love's sinners in sweet cloth kneel to a hyleg image,  
Nutmeg, civet, and sea-parsley serve the plagued groom and  
    bride  
Who have brought forth the urchin grief.

*O make me a mask*

O MAKE me a mask and a wall to shut from your spies  
Of the sharp, enamelled eyes and the spectacled claws  
Rape and rebellion in the nurseries of my face,  
Gag of a dumbstruck tree to block from bare enemies  
The bayonet tongue in this undefended prayerpiece,  
The present mouth, and the sweetly blown trumpet of lies,  
Shaped in old armour and oak the countenance of a dunce  
To shield the glistening brain and blunt the examiners,  
And a tear-stained widower grief drooped from the lashes  
To veil belladonna and let the dry eyes perceive  
Others betray the lamenting lies of their losses  
By the curve of the nude mouth or the laugh up the sleeve.

### *The spire cranes*

THE spire cranes. Its statue is an aviary.  
From the stone nest it does not let the feathery  
Carved birds blunt their striking throats on the salt gravel,  
Pierce the spilt sky with diving wing in weed and heel  
An inch in froth Chimes cheat the prison spire, pelter  
In time like outlaw rains on that priest, water,  
Time for the swimmers' hands, music for silver lock  
And mouth Both note and plume plunge from the spire's  
hook.

Those craning birds are choice for you, songs that jump back  
To the built voice, or fly with winter to the bells,  
But do not travel down dumb wind like prodigals.

## *After the funeral*

(In memory of Ann Jones)

AFTER the funeral, mule praises, brays,  
Windshake of sailshaped ears, muffle-toed tap  
Tap happily of one peg in the thick  
Grave's foot, blinds down the lids, the teeth in black,  
The spittled eyes, the salt ponds in the sleeves,  
Morning-smack of the spade that wakes up sleep,  
Shakes a desolate boy who slits his throat  
In the dark of the coffin and sheds dry leaves,  
That breaks one bone to light with a judgment clout,  
After the feast of tear-stuffed time and thistles  
In a room with a stuffed fox and a stale fern,  
I stand, for this memorial's sake, alone  
In the snivelling hours with dead, humped Ann  
Whose hooded, fountain heart once fell in puddles  
Round the parched worlds of Wales and drowned each sun  
(Though this for her is a monstrous image blindly  
Magnified out of praise, her death was a still drop;  
She would not have me sinking in the holy  
Flood of her heart's fame, she would lie dumb and deep  
And need no druid of her broken body)  
But I, Ann's bard on a raised hearth, call all  
The seas to service that her wood-tongued virtue  
Babble like a bellbuoy over the hymning heads,  
Bow down the walls of the ferned and foxy woods  
That her love sing and swing through a brown chapel,  
Bless her bent spirit with four, crossing birds.  
Her flesh was meek as milk, but this skyward statue  
With the wild breast and blessed and giant skull

Is carved from her in a room with a wet window  
In a fiercely mourning house in a crooked year  
I know her scrubbed and sour humble hands  
Lie with religion in their cramp, her threadbare  
Whisper in a damp word, her wits drilled hollow,  
Her fist of a face died clenched on a round pain;  
And sculptured Ann is seventy years of stone.  
These cloud-sopped, marble hands, this monumental  
Argument of the hewn voice, gesture and psalm,  
Storm me forever over her grave until  
The stuffed lung of the fox twitch and cry Love  
And the strutting fern lay seeds on the black sill.

*Once it was the colour of saying*

ONCE IT was the colour of saying  
Soaked my table the uglier side of a hill  
With a capsized field where a school sat still  
And a black and white patch of girls grew playing;  
The gentle seaslides of saying I must undo  
That all the charmingly drowned arise to cockcrow and kill.  
When I whistled with mitching boys through a reservoir  
park  
Where at night we stoned the cold and cuckoo  
Lovers in the dirt of their leafy beds,  
The shade of their trees was a word of many shades  
And a lamp of lightning for the poor in the dark,  
Now my saying shall be my undoing,  
And every stone I wind off like a reel

*Not from this anger*

NOT FROM this anger, anticlimax after  
Refusal struck her loin and the lame flower  
Bent like a beast to lap the singular floods  
In a land strapped by hunger  
Shall she receive a bellyful of weeds  
And bear those tendril hands I touch across  
The agonized, two seas.  
Behind my head a square of sky sags over  
The circular smile tossed from lover to lover  
And the golden ball spins out of the skies;  
Not from this anger after  
Refusal struck like a bell under water  
Shall her smile breed that mouth, behind the mirror,  
That burns along my eyes.

### *How shall my animal*

How SHALL my animal  
Whose wizard shape I trace in the cavernous skull,  
Vessel of abscesses and exultation's shell,  
Endure burial under the spelling wall,  
The invoked, shrouding veil at the cap of the face,  
Who should be furious,  
Drunk as a vineyard snail, flailed like an octopus,  
Roaring, crawling, quarrel  
With the outside weathers,  
The natural circle of the discovered skies  
Draw down to its weird eyes?

How shall it magnetize,  
Towards the studded male in a bent, midnight blaze  
That melts the lionhead's heel and horseshoe of the head,  
A brute land in the cool top of the country days  
To trot with a loud mate the haybeds of a mile,  
Love and labour and kill  
In quick, sweet, cruel light till the locked ground sprout out,  
The black, burst sea rejoice,  
The bowels turn turtle,  
Claw of the crabbed veins squeeze from each red particle  
The parched and raging voice?

Fishermen of mermen  
Creep and harp on the tide, sinking their charmed, bent pin  
With bridebait of gold bread, I with a living skein,  
Tongue and ear in the thread, angle the temple-bound  
Curl-locked and animal cavepools of spells and bone,  
Trace out a tentacle,



Nailed with an open eye, in the bowl of wounds and weed  
To clasp my fury on ground  
And clap its great blood down;  
Never shall beast be born to atlas the few seas  
Or poise the day on a horn.

Sigh long, clay cold, lie shorn,  
Cast high, stunned on gilled stone, sly scissors ground in  
frost  
Clack through the thicket of strength, love hewn in pillars  
drops  
With carved bird, saint, and sun, the wrackspiked maiden  
mouth  
Lops, as a bush plumed with flames, the rant of the fierce eye,  
Clips short the gesture of breath.  
Die in red feathers when the flying heaven's cut,  
And roll with the knocked earth:  
Lie dry, rest robbed, my beast.  
You have kicked from a dark den, leaped up the whinnying  
light,  
And dug your grave in my breast.

*The tombstone told when she died*

THE tombstone told when she died.  
Her two surnames stopped me still.  
A virgin married at rest.  
She married in this pouring place,  
That I struck one day by luck,  
Before I heard in my mother's side  
Or saw in the looking-glass shell  
The rain through her cold heart speak  
And the sun killed in her face  
More the thick stone cannot tell.  
Before she lay on a stranger's bed  
With a hand plunged through her hair,  
Or that rainy tongue beat back  
Through the devilish years and innocent deaths  
To the room of a secret child,  
Among men later I heard it said  
She cried her white-dressed limbs were bare  
And her red lips were kissed black,  
She wept in her pain and made mouths,  
Talked and tore though her eyes smiled

I who saw in a hurried film  
Death and this mad heroine  
Meet once on a mortal wall  
Heard her speak through the chipped beak  
Of the stone bird guarding her.  
I died before bedtime came  
But my womb was bellowing  
And I felt with my bare fall  
A blazing red harsh head tear up  
And the dear floods of his hair.

## *On no work of words*

ON NO work of words now for three lean months in the  
bloody  
Belly of the rich year and the big purse of my body  
I bitterly take to task my poverty and craft:

To take to give is all, return what is hungrily given  
Puffing the pounds of manna up through the dew to heaven,  
The lovely gift of the gab bangs back on a blind shaft.

To lift to leave from the treasures of man is pleasing death  
That will rake at last all currencies of the marked breath  
And count the taken, forsaken mysteries in a bad dark.

To surrender now is to pay the expensive ogre twice.  
Ancient woods of my blood, dash down to the nut of the seas  
If I take to burn or return this world which is each man's  
work.

*A saint about to fall*

A SAINT about to fall,  
The stained flats of heaven hit and razed  
To the kissed kite hems of his shawl,  
On the last street wave praised  
The unwinding, song by rock,  
Of the woven wall  
Of his father's house in the sands,  
The vanishing of the musical ship-work and the chucked  
bells,  
The wound-down cough of the blood-counting clock  
Behind a face of hands,  
On the angelic etna of the last whirring featherlands,  
Wind-heeled foot in the hole of a fireball,  
Hymned his shrivelling flock,  
On the last rick's tip by spilled wine-wells  
Sang heaven hungry and the quick  
Cut Christbread spitting vinegar and all  
The mazes of his praise and envious tongue were worked in  
flames and shells.

Glory cracked like a flea.  
The sun-leaved holy candlewoods  
Drivelled down to one singeing tree  
With a stub of black buds,  
The sweet, fish-gilled boats bringing blood  
Lurched through a scuttled sea  
With a hold of leeches and straws,  
Heaven fell with his fall and one crocked bell beat the left air



*'If my head hurt a hair's foot'*

'IF MY head hurt a hair's foot  
Pack back the downed bone. If the unpricked ball of my  
breath  
Bump on a spout let the bubbles jump out.  
Sooner drop with the worm of the ropes round my throat  
Than bully ill love in the clouted scene.

'All game phrases fit your ring of a cockfight.  
I'll comb the snarled woods with a glove on a lamp,  
Peck, sprint, dance on fountains and duck time  
Before I rush in a crouch the ghost with a hammer, air,  
Strike light, and bloody a loud room.

'If my bunched, monkey coming is cruel  
Rage me back to the making house. My hand unravel  
When you sew the deep door. The bed is a cross place.  
Bend, if my journey ache, direction like an arc or make  
A limp and riderless shape to leap nine thinning months

'No. Not for Christ's dazzling bed  
Or a nacreous sleep among soft particles and charms  
My dear would I change my tears or your iron head.  
Thrust, my daughter or son, to escape, there is none, none,  
none,  
Nor when all ponderous heaven's host of waters breaks.

'Now to awake husked of gestures and my joy like a cave  
To the anguish and carrion, to the infant forever unfree,  
O my lost love bounced from a good home,

The grain that hurries this way from the rim of the grave  
Has a voice and a house, and there and here you must couch  
and cry.

‘Rest beyond choice in the dust-appointed grain,  
At the breast stored with seas    No return  
Through the waves of the fat streets nor the skeleton’s thin  
ways.

The grave and my calm body are shut to your coming as stone,  
And the endless beginning of prodigies suffers open.

### *Twenty-four years*

TWENTY-FOUR years remind the tears of my eyes.  
(Bury the dead for fear that they walk to the grave in labour.)  
In the groin of the natural doorway I crouched like a tailor  
Sewing a shroud for a journey  
By the light of the meat-eating sun.  
Dressed to die, the sensual strut begun,  
With my red veins full of money,  
In the final direction of the elementary town  
I advance for as long as forever is.



## *The Conversation of Prayer*

THE conversation of prayers about to be said  
By the child going to bed and the man on the stairs  
Who climbs to his dying love in her high room,  
The one not caring to whom in his sleep he will move  
And the other full of tears that she will be dead,

Turns in the dark on the sound they know will arise  
Into the answering skies from the green ground,  
From the man on the stairs and the child by his bed.  
The sound about to be said in the two prayers  
For the sleep in a safe land and the love who dies

Will be the same grief flying. Whom shall they calm?  
Shall the child sleep unharmed or the man be crying?  
The conversation of prayers about to be said  
Turns on the quick and the dead, and the man on the stairs  
To-night shall find no dying but alive and warm

In the fire of his care his love in the high room.  
And the child not caring to whom he climbs his prayer  
Shall drown in a grief as deep as his true grave,  
And mark the dark eyed wave, through the eyes of sleep,  
Dragging him up the stairs to one who lies dead.

*A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a  
Child in London*

NEVER until the mankind making  
Bird beast and flower  
Fathering and all humbling darkness  
Tells with silence the last light breaking  
And the still hour  
Is come of the sea tumbling in harness

And I must enter again the round  
Zion of the water bead  
And the synagogue of the ear of corn  
Shall I let pray the shadow of a sound  
Or sow my salt seed  
In the least valley of sackcloth to mourn

The majesty and burning of the child's death.  
I shall not murder  
The mankind of her going with a grave truth  
Nor blaspheme down the stations of the breath  
With any further  
Elegy of innocence and youth

Deep with the first dead lies London's daughter,  
Robed in the long friends,  
The grains beyond age, the dark veins of her mother,  
Secret by the unmourning water  
Of the riding Thames  
After the first death, there is no other.

*Poem in October*

It was my thirtieth year to heaven  
Woke to my hearing from harbour and neighbour wood  
And the mussel pooled and the heron  
Priested shore  
The morning beckon  
With water praying and call of seagull and rook  
And the knock of sailing boats on the net webbed wall  
Myself to set foot  
That second  
In the still sleeping town and set forth.

My birthday began with the water-  
Birds and the birds of the winged trees flying my name  
Above the farms and the white horses  
And I rose  
In rainy autumn  
And walked abroad in a shower of all my days.  
High tide and the heron dived when I took the road  
Over the border  
And the gates  
Of the town closed as the town awoke.

A springful of larks in a rolling  
Cloud and the roadside bushes brimming with whistling  
Blackbirds and the sun of October  
Summery  
On the hill's shoulder,

Here were fond climates and sweet singers suddenly  
Come in the morning where I wandered and listened  
    To the rain wringing  
        Wind blow cold  
In the wood faraway under me.

Pale rain over the dwindling harbour  
And over the sea wet church the size of a snail  
    With its horns through mist and the castle  
        Brown as owls  
    But all the gardens  
Of spring and summer were blooming in the tall tales  
Beyond the border and under the lark full cloud  
    There could I marvel  
        My birthday  
Away but the weather turned around.

It turned away from the blithe country  
And down the other air and the blue altered sky  
    Streamed again a wonder of summer  
        With apples  
    Pears and red currants  
And I saw in the turning so clearly a child's  
Forgotten mornings when he walked with his mother  
    Through the parables  
        Of sun light  
And the legends of the green chapels

And the twice told fields of infancy  
That his tears burned my cheeks and his heart moved in  
    mine.

These were the woods the river and sea  
Where a boy  
In the listening  
Summertime of the dead whispered the truth of his joy  
To the trees and the stones and the fish in the tide.  
And the mystery  
Sang alive  
Still in the water and singingbirds.

And there could I marvel my birthday  
Away but the weather turned around. And the true  
Joy of the long dead child sang burning  
In the sun.  
It was my thirtieth  
Year to heaven stood there then in the summer noon  
Though the town below lay leaved with October blood  
O may my heart's truth  
Still be sung  
On this high hill in a year's turning

## *This Side of the Truth*

(for Llewelyn)

THIS side of the truth,  
You may not see, my son,  
King of your blue eyes  
In the blinding country of youth,  
That all is undone,  
Under the unminding skies,  
Of innocence and guilt  
Before you move to make  
One gesture of the heart or head,  
Is gathered and spilt  
Into the winding dark  
Like the dust of the dead.

Good and bad, two ways  
Of moving about your death  
By the grinding sea,  
King of your heart in the blind days,  
Blow away like breath,  
Go crying through you and me  
And the souls of all men  
Into the innocent  
Dark, and the guilty dark, and good  
Death, and bad death, and then  
In the last element  
Fly like the stars' blood,

Like the sun's tears,  
Like the moon's seed, rubbish  
And fire, the flying rant  
Of the sky, king of your six years.  
And the wicked wish,  
Down the beginning of plants  
And animals and birds,  
Water and light, the earth and sky,  
Is cast before you move,  
And all your deeds and words,  
Each truth, each lie,  
Die in unjudging love.

## *To Others than You*

FRIEND by enemy I call you out.

You with a bad coin in your socket,  
You my friend there with a winning air  
Who palmed the lie on me when you looked  
Brassily at my shyest secret,  
Enticed with twinkling bits of the eye  
Till the sweet tooth of my love bit dry,  
Rasped at last, and I stumbled and sucked,  
Whom now I conjure to stand as thief  
In the memory worked by mirrors,  
With unforgettably smiling act,  
Quickness of hand in the velvet glove  
And my whole heart under your hammer,  
Were once such a creature, so gay and frank  
A desireless familiar  
I never thought to utter or think  
While you displaced a truth in the air,

That though I loved them for their faults  
As much as for their good,  
My friends were enemies on stilts  
With their heads in a cunning cloud.



## *Love in the Asylum*

A STRANGER has come  
To share my room in the house not right in the head,  
A girl mad as birds

Bolting the night of the door with her arm her plume.  
Strait in the mazed bed  
She deludes the heaven-proof house with entering clouds

Yet she deludes with walking the nightmârish room,  
At large as the dead,  
Or rides the imagined oceans of the male wards.

She has come possessed  
Who admits the delusive light through the bouncing wall,  
Possessed by the skies

She sleeps in the narrow trough yet she walks the dust  
Yet raves at her will  
On the madhouse boards worn thin by my walking tears

And taken by light in her arms at long and dear last  
I may without fail  
Suffer the first vision that set fire to the stars.

## *Unluckily for a Death*

UNLUCKILY for a death  
Waiting with phoenix under  
The pyre yet to be lighted of my sins and days,  
And for the woman in shades  
Saint carved and sensual among the scudding  
Dead and gone, dedicate forever to my self  
Though the brawl of the kiss has not occurred  
On the clay cold mouth, on the fire  
Branded forehead, that could bind  
Her constant, nor the winds of love broken wide  
To the wind the choir and cloister  
Of the wintry nunnery of the order of lust  
Beneath my life, that sighs for the seducer's coming  
In the sun strokes of summer,  
  
Loving on this sea banded guilt  
My holy lucky body  
Under the cloud against love is caught and held and kissed  
In the mill of the midst  
Of the descending day, the dark our folly,  
Cut to the still star in the order of the quick  
But blessed by such heroic hosts in your every  
Inch and glance that the wound  
Is certain god, and the ceremony of souls  
Is celebrated there, and communion between suns.  
Never shall my self chant  
About the saint in shades while the endless breviary  
Turns of your prayed flesh, nor shall I shoo the bird below,  
me:  
The death bidding two lie lonely.

I see the tigrion in tears  
In the androgynous dark,  
His striped and noon maned tribe striding to holocaust,  
The she mules bear their minotaurs,  
The duck-billed platypus broody in a milk of birds.  
I see the wanting nun saint carved in a garb  
Of shades, symbol of desire beyond my hours  
And gulfs, great crotch and giant  
Continence. I see the unfired phoenix, herald  
And heaven crier, arrow now of aspiring  
And the renouncing of islands.  
All love but for the full assemblage in flower  
Of the living flesh is monstrous or immortal,  
And the grave its daughters.

Love, my fate got luckily,  
Teaches with no telling  
That the phoenix' bid for heaven and the desire after  
Death in the carved nunnery  
Both shall fail if I bow not to your blessing  
Nor walk in the cool of your mortal garden  
With immortality at my side like Christ the sky.  
This I know from the native  
Tongue of your translating eyes. The young stars told me,  
Hurling into beginning like Christ the child.  
Lucklessly she must lie patient  
And the vaulting bird be still. O my true love, hold me.  
In your every inch and glance is the globe of genesis spun,  
And the living earth your sons.

## *The Hunchback in the Park*

THE hunchback in the park  
A solitary mister  
Propped between trees and water  
From the opening of the garden lock  
That lets the trees and water enter  
Until the Sunday sombre bell at dark

Eating bread from a newspaper  
Drinking water from the chained cup  
That the children filled with gravel  
In the fountain basin where I sailed my ship  
Slept at night in a dog kennel  
But nobody chained him up.

Like the park birds he came early  
Like the water he sat down  
And Mister they called Hey mister  
The truant boys from the town  
Running when he had heard them clearly  
On out of sound

Past lake and rockery  
Laughing when he shook his paper  
Hunchbacked in mockery  
Through the loud zoo of the willow groves  
Dodging the park keeper  
With his stick that picked up leaves.

And the old dog sleeper  
Alone between nurses and swans  
While the boys among willows  
Made the tigers jump out of their eyes  
To roar on the rockery stones  
And the groves were blue with sailors

Made all day until bell time  
A woman figure without fault  
Straight as a young elm  
Straight and tall from his crooked bones  
That she might stand in the night  
After the locks and chains

All night in the unmade park  
After the railings and shrubberies  
The birds the grass the trees the lake  
And the wild boys innocent as strawberries  
Had followed the hunchback  
To his kennel in the dark.

## *Into her Lying Down Head*

### I

INTO HER lying down head  
His enemies entered bed,  
Under the encumbered eyelid,  
Through the rippled drum of the hair-buried ear;  
And Noah's rekindled now unkind dove  
Flew man-bearing there.  
Last night in a raping wave  
Whales unreined from the green grave  
In fountains of origin gave up their love,  
Along her innocence glided  
Juan aflame and savagely young King Lear,  
Queen Catherine howling bare  
And Samson drowned in his hair,  
The colossal intimacies of silent  
Once seen strangers or shades on a stair;  
There the dark blade and wanton sighing her down  
To a haycock couch and the scythes of his arms  
Rode and whistled a hundred times  
Before the crowing morning climbed;  
Man was the burning England she was sleep-walking, and the  
enamouring island  
Made her limbs blind by luminous charms,  
Sleep to a newborn sleep in a swaddling loin-leaf stroked and  
sang  
And his runaway beloved childlike laid in the acorned  
sand.

There where a numberless tongue  
 Wound their room with a male moan,  
 His faith around her flew undone  
 And darkness hung the walls with baskets of snakes,  
 A furnace-nostrilled column-membered  
     Super-or-near man  
     Resembling to her dulled sense  
     The thief of adolescence,  
 Early imaginary half remembered  
     Oceanic lover alone  
 Jealousy cannot forget for all her sakes,  
     Made his bad bed in her good  
     Night, and enjoyed as he would.  
 Crying, white gowned, from the middle moonlit stages  
     Out to the tiered and hearing tide,  
 Close and far she announced the theft of the heart  
 In the taken body at many ages,  
     Trespasser and broken bride  
     Celebrating at her side  
 All blood-signed assailings and vanished marriages in which  
     he had no lovely part  
     Nor could share, for his pride, to the least  
 Mutter and foul wingbeat of the solemnizing nightpriest  
 Her holy unholy hours with the always anonymous beast.

### III

Two sand grains together in bed,  
 Head to heaven-circling head,  
 Singly lie with the whole wide shore,  
 The covering sea their nightfall with no names;  
 And out of every domed and soil-based shell  
     One voice in chains declaims  
     The female, deadly, and male  
     Lubidinous betrayal,  
 Golden dissolving under the water veil.  
     A she bird sleeping brittle by  
 Her lover's wings that fold to-morrow's flight,  
     Within the nested treefork  
     Sings to the treading hawk  
 Carrion, paradise, churru my bright yolk.  
     A blade of grass longs with the meadow,  
 A stone lies lost and locked in the lark-high hill.  
 Open as to the air to the naked shadow  
     O she lies alone and still,  
     Innocent between two wars,  
 With the incestuous secret brother in the seconds to perpetuate the stars,  
     A man torn up mourns in the sole night.  
 And the second comers, the severers, the enemies from the deep  
 Forgotten dark, rest their pulse and bury their dead in her  
     faithless sleep.



*Do not go gentle into that good night*

Do NOT go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

## *Deaths and Entrances*

ON ALMOST the incendiary eve  
Of several near deaths,  
When one at the great least of your best loved  
And always known must leave  
Lions and fires of his flying breath,  
Of your immortal friends  
Who'd raise the organs of the counted dust  
To shout and sing your praise,  
One who called deepest down shall hold his peace  
That cannot sink or cease  
Endlessly to his wound  
In many married London's estranging grief.

On almost the incendiary eve  
When at your lips and keys,  
Locking, unlocking, the murdered strangers weave,  
One who is most unknown,  
Your polestar neighbour, sun of another street,  
Will dive up to his tears.  
He'll bathe his raining blood in the male sea  
Who strode for your own dead  
And wind his globe out of your water thread  
And load the throats of shells  
With every cry since light  
Flashed first across his thunderclapping eyes.

On almost the incendiary eve  
Of deaths and entrances,  
When near and strange wounded on London's waves  
Have sought your single grave,

One enemy, of many, who knows well  
Your heart is luminous  
In the watched dark, quivering through locks and caves,  
Will pull the thunderbolts  
To shut the sun, plunge, mount your darkened keys  
And sear just riders back,  
Until that one loved least  
Looms the last Samson of your zodiac.

## *A Winter's Tale*

IT IS A winter's tale

That the snow blind twilight ferries over the lakes  
And floating fields from the farm in the cup of the vales,  
Gliding windless through the hand folded flakes,  
The pale breath of cattle at the stealthy sail,

And the stars falling cold,  
And the smell of hay in the snow, and the far owl  
Warning among the folds, and the frozen hold  
Flocked with the sheep white smoke of the farm house cowl  
In the river wended vales where the tale was told.

Once when the world turned old  
On a star of faith pure as the drifting bread,  
As the food and flames of the snow, a man unrolled  
The scrolls of fire that burned in his heart and head,  
Torn and alone in a farm house in a fold

Of fields. And burning then  
In his firelit island ringed by the winged snow  
And the dung hills white as wool and the hen  
Roosts sleeping chill till the flame of the cock crow  
Combs through the mantled yards and the morning men

Stumble out with their spades,  
The cattle stirring, the mousing cat stepping shy,  
The puffed birds hopping and hunting, the milkmaids  
Gentle in their clogs over the fallen sky,  
And all the woken farm at its white trades,

He knelt, he wept, he prayed,  
By the spit and the black pot in the log bright light  
And the cup and the cut bréad in the dancing shade,  
In the muffled house, in the quick of night,  
At the point of love, forsaken and afraid.

He knelt on the cold stones,  
He wept from the crest of grief, he prayed to the veiled sky  
May his hunger go howling on bare white bones  
Past the statues of the stables and the sky roofed sties  
And the duck pond glass and the blinding byres alone

Into the home of prayers  
And fires where he should prowl down the cloud  
Of his snow blind love and rush in the white lairs.  
His naked need struck him howling and bowed  
Though no sound flowed down the hand folded air

But only the wind strung  
Hunger of birds in the fields of the bread of water, tossed  
In high corn and the harvest melting on their tongues.  
And his nameless need bound him burning and lost  
When cold as snow he should run the wended vales among

The rivers mouthed in night,  
And drown in the drifts of his need, and lie curled caught  
In the always desiring centre of the white  
Inhuman cradle and the bride bed forever sought  
By the believer lost and the hurled outcast of light.

Deliver him, he cried,  
By losing him all in love, and cast his need  
Alone and naked in the engulfing bride,  
Never to flourish in the fields of the white seed  
Or flower under the time dying flesh astride.

Listen. The minstrels sing  
In the departed villages. The nightingale,  
Dust in the buried wood, flies on the grains of her wings  
And spells on the winds of the dead his winter's tale  
The voice of the dust of water from the withered spring

Is telling. The wizened  
Stream with bells and baying water bounds The dew rings  
On the gristed leaves and the long gone glistening  
Parish of snow. The carved mouths in the rock are wind  
swept strings  
Time sings through the intricately dead snow drop. Listen

It was a hand or sound  
In the long ago land that glided the dark door wide  
And there outside on the bread of the ground  
A she bird rose and rayed like a burning bride.  
A she bird dawned, and her breast with snow and scarlet  
downed.

Look. And the dancers move  
On the departed, snow bushed green, wanton in moon light  
As a dust of pigeons. Exulting, the grave hooved  
Horses, centaur dead, turn and tread the drenched white  
Paddocks in the farms of birds. The dead oak walks for love.

The carved limbs in the rock  
Leap, as to trumpets. Calligraphy of the old  
Leaves is dancing. Lines of age on the stones weave in a  
flock.  
And the harp shaped voice of the water's dust plucks in a fold  
Of fields. For love, the long ago she bird rises. Look.

And the wild wings were raised  
Above her folded head, and the soft feathered voice  
Was flying through the house as though the she bird praised  
And all the elements of the slow fall rejoiced  
That a man knelt alone in the cup of the vales,

In the mantle and calm,  
By the spit and the black pot in the log bright light  
And the sky of birds in the plumed voice charmed  
Him up and he ran like a wind after the kindling flight  
Past the blind barns and byres of the windless farm.

In the poles of the year  
When black birds died like priests in the cloaked hedge row  
And over the cloth of counties the far hills rode near,  
Under the one leaved trees ran a scarecrow of snow  
And fast through the drifts of the thickets antlered like deer,

Rags and prayers down the knee-  
Deep hillocks and loud on the numbed lakes,  
All night lost and long wading in the wake of the she-  
Bird through the times and lands and tribes of the slow flakes.  
Listen and look where she sails the goose plucked sea,

The sky, the bird, the bride,  
The cloud, the need, the planted stars, the joy beyond  
The fields of seed and the time dying flesh astride,  
The heavens, the heaven, the grave, the burning font.  
In the far ago land the door of his death glided wide,

And the bird descended.  
On a bread white hill over the cupped farm  
And the lakes and floating fields and the river wended  
Vales where he prayed to come to the last harm  
And the home of prayers and fires, the tale ended.

The dancing perishes  
On the white, no longer growing green, and, minstrel dead,  
The singing breaks in the snow shod villages of wishes  
That once cut the figures of birds on the deep bread  
And over the glazed lakes skated the shapes of fishes

Flying The rite is shorn  
Of nightingale and centaur dead horse. The springs wither  
Back. Lines of age sleep on the stones till trumpeting dawn.  
Exultation lies down. Time buries the spring weather  
That belled and rounded with the fossil and the dew reborn

For the bird lay bedded  
In a choir of wings, as though she slept or died,  
And the wings glided wide and he was hymned and wedded,  
And through the thighs of the engulfing bride,  
The woman breasted and the heaven headed

Bird, he was brought low,  
Burning in the bride bed of love, in the whirl-  
Pool at the wanting centre, in the folds  
Of paradise, in the spun bud of the world.  
And she rose with him flowering in her melting snow.



## *On a Wedding Anniversary*

THE SKY is torn across  
This ragged anniversary of two  
Who moved for three years in tune  
Down the long walks of their vows.

Now their love lies a loss  
And Love and his patients roar on a chain;  
From every true or crater  
Carrying cloud, Death strikes their house.

Too late in the wrong rain  
They come together whom their love parted:  
The windows pour into their heart  
And the doors burn in their brain.

## *There was a Saviour*

THERE was a saviour  
Rarer than radium,  
Commoner than water, crueller than truth,  
Children kept from the sun  
Assembled at his tongue  
To hear the golden note turn in a groove,  
Prisoners of wishes locked their eyes  
In the jails and studies of his keyless smiles.

The voice of children says  
From a lost wilderness  
There was calm to be done in his safe unrest,  
When hindering man hurt  
Man, animal, or bird  
We hid our fears in that murdering breath,  
Silence, silence to do, when earth grew loud,  
In lairs and asylums of the tremendous shout

There was glory to hear  
In the churches of his tears,  
Under his downy arm you sighed as he struck,  
O you who could not cry  
On to the ground when a man died  
Put a tear for joy in the unearthly flood  
And laid your cheek against a cloud-formed shell:  
Now in the dark there is only yourself and myself.

Two proud, blacked brothers cry,  
Winter-locked side by side,  
To this inhospitable hollow year,  
O we who could not stir  
One lean sigh when we heard  
Greed on man beating near and fire neighbour  
But wailed and nested in the sky-blue wall  
Now break a giant tear for the little known fall,

For the drooping of homes  
That did not nurse our bones,  
Brave deaths of only ones but never found,  
Now see, alone in us,  
Our own true strangers' dust  
Ride through the doors of our unentered house.  
Exiled in us we arouse the soft,  
Unclenched, armless, silk and rough love that breaks all  
rocks.

## *On the Marriage of a Virgin*

WAKING alone in a multitude of loves when morning's light  
Surprised in the opening of her nightlong eyes  
His golden yesterday asleep upon the iris  
And this day's sun leapt up the sky out of her thighs  
Was miraculous virginity old as loaves and fishes,  
Though the moment of a miracle is unending lightning  
And the shipyards of Galilee's footprints hide a navy of  
doves.

No longer will the vibrations of the sun desire on  
Her deepsea pillow where once she married alone,  
Her heart all ears and eyes, lips catching the avalanche  
Of the golden ghost who ringed with his streams her mercury  
bone,  
Who under the lids of her windows hoisted his golden lug-  
gage,  
For a man sleeps where fire leapt down and she learns through  
his arm  
That other sun, the jealous coursing of the unrivalled blood.

*In my Craft or Sullen Art*

IN my craft or sullen art  
Exercised in the still night  
When only the moon rages  
And the lovers lie abed  
With all their griefs in their arms,  
I labour by singing light  
Not for ambition or bread  
Or the strut and trade of charms  
On the ivory stages  
But for the common wages  
Of their most secret heart.

Not for the proud man apart  
From the raging moon I write  
On these spindrift pages  
Nor for the towering dead  
With their nightingales and psalms  
But for the lovers, their arms  
Round the griefs of the ages,  
Who pay no praise or wages  
Nor heed my craft or art.

## *Ceremony After a Fire Raid*

### I

#### MYSELVES

The grievors

Grieve

Among the street burned to tireless death

A child of a few hours

With its kneading mouth

Charred on the black breast of the grave

The mother dug, and its arms full of fires.

Begin

With singing

Sing

Darkness kindled back into beginning

When the caught tongue nodded blind,

A star was broken

Into the centuries of the child

Myself grieve now, and miracles cannot atone.

Forgive

Us forgive

Us your death that myself the believers

May hold it in a great flood

Till the blood shall spurt,

And the dust shall sing like a bird

As the grains blow, as your death grows, through our heart.

Crying  
Your dying  
Cry,  
Child beyond cockcrow, by the fire-dwarfed  
Street we chant the flying sea  
In the body bereft.  
Love is the last light spoken. Oh  
Seed of sons in the loin of the black husk left.

II

I know not whether  
Adam or Eve, the adorned holy bullock  
Or the white ewe lamb  
Or the chosen virgin  
Laid in her snow  
On the altar of London,  
Was the first to die  
In the cinder of the little skull,  
O bride and bride groom  
O Adam and Eve together  
Lying in the lull  
Under the sad breast of the head stone  
White as the skeleton  
Of the garden of Eden.

I know the legend  
Of Adam and Eve is never for a second  
Silent in my service  
Over the dead infants  
Over the one  
Child who was priest and servants,

Word, singers, and tongue  
In the cinder of the little skull,  
Who was the serpent's  
Night fall and the fruit like a sun,  
Man and woman undone,  
Beginning crumbled back to darkness  
Bare as the nurseries  
Of the garden of wilderness.

III

Into the organpipes and steeples  
Of the luminous cathedrals,  
Into the weathercocks' molten mouths  
Rippling in twelve-winded circles,  
Into the dead clock burning the hour  
Over the urn of sabbaths  
Over the whirling ditch of daybreak  
Over the sun's hovel and the slum of fire  
And the golden pavements laid in requiems,  
Into the bread in a wheatfield of flames,  
Into the wine burning like brandy,  
The masses of the sea  
The masses of the sea under  
The masses of the infant-bearing sea  
Erupt, fountain, and enter to utter for ever  
Glory glory glory  
The sundering ultimate kingdom of genesis' thunder.



*Once below a time*

I

ONCE below a time,  
When my pinned-around-the-spirit  
Cut-to-measure flesh bit,  
Suit for a serial sum  
On the first of each hardship,  
My paid-for slaved-for own too late  
In love torn breeches and blistered jacket  
On the snapping rims of the ashpit,  
In grottoes I worked with birds,  
Spiked with a mastiff collar,  
Tasselled in cellar and snipping shop  
Or decked on a cloud swallower,  
  
Then swift from a bursting sea with bottlecork boats  
And out-of-perspective sailors,  
In common clay clothes disguised as scales,  
As a he-god's paddling water skirts,  
I astounded the sitting tailors,  
I set back the clock faced tailors,  
Then, bushily swanked in bear wig and tails,  
Hopping hot leaved and feathered  
From the kangaroo foot of the earth,  
From the chill, silent centre  
Trailing the frost bitten cloth,  
Up through the lubber crust of Wales  
I rocketed to astonish  
The flashing needle rock of squatters,  
The criers of Shabby and Shorten,  
The famous stitch droppers.

My silly suit, hardly yet suffered for,  
 Around some coffin carrying  
 Birdman or told ghost I hung.  
 And the owl hood, the heel hider,  
 Claw fold and hole for the rotten  
 Head, deceived, I believed, my maker,

The cloud perched tailors' master with nerves for cotton.  
 On the old seas from stories, thrashing my wings,  
 Combing with antlers, Columbus on fire,  
 I was pierced by the idol tailor's eyes,  
 Glared through shark mask and navigating head,  
 Cold Nansen's beak on a boat full of gongs,

To the boy of common thread,  
 The bright pretender, the ridiculous sea dandy  
 With dry flesh and earth for adorning and bed.  
 It was sweet to drown in the readymade handy water  
 With my cherry capped dangler green as seaweed  
 Summoning a child's voice from a webfoot stone,  
 Never never oh never to regret the bugle I wore  
 On my cleaving arm as I blasted in a wave.  
 Now shown and mostly bare I would lie down,  
 Lie down, lie down and live  
 As quiet as a bone.

## *When I Woke*

WHEN I woke, the town spoke.  
Birds and clocks and cross bells  
Dinned aside the coiling crowd,  
The reptile profligates in a flame,  
Spoilers and pokers of sleep,  
The next-door sea dispelled  
Frogs and satans and woman-luck,  
While a man outside with a billhook,  
Up to his head in his blood,  
Cutting the morning off,  
The warm-veined double of Time  
And his scarving beard from a book,  
Slashed down the last snake as though  
It were a wand or subtle bough,  
Its tongue peeled in the wrap of a leaf.

Every morning I make,  
God in bed, good and bad,  
After a water-face walk,  
The death-stagged scatter-breath  
Mammoth and sparrowfall  
Everybody's earth.  
Where birds ride like leaves and boats like ducks  
I heard, this morning, waking,  
Crossly out of the town noises  
A voice in the erected air,  
No prophet-progeny of mine,  
Cry my sea town was breaking.  
No Time, spoke the clocks, no God, rang the bells,  
I drew the white sheet over the islands  
And the coins on my eyelids sang like shells.

*Among those Killed in the Dawn Raid was a  
Man Aged a Hundred*

WHEN the morning was waking over the war  
He put on his clothes and stepped out and he died,  
The locks yawned loose and a blast blew them wide,  
He dropped where he loved on the burst pavement stone  
And the funeral grains of the slaughtered floor.  
Tell his street on its back he stopped a sun  
And the craters of his eyes grew springshoots and fire  
When all the keys shot from the locks, and rang  
Dig no more for the chains of his grey-haired heart.  
The heavenly ambulance drawn by a wound  
Assembling waits for the spade's ring on the cage.  
O keep his bones away from that common cart,  
The morning is flying on the wings of his age  
And a hundred storks perch on the sun's right hand.

### *Lie Still, Sleep Becalmed*

LIE STILL, sleep becalmed, sufferer with the wound  
In the throat, burning and turning All night afloat  
On the silent sea we have heard the sound  
That came from the wound wrapped in the salt sheet.

Under the mile off moon we trembled listening  
To the sea sound flowing like blood from the loud wound  
And when the salt sheet broke in a storm of singing  
The voices of all the drowned swam on the wind.

Open a pathway through the slow sad sail,  
Throw wide to the wind the gates of the wandering boat  
For my voyage to begin to the end of my wound,  
We heard the sea sound sing, we saw the salt sheet tell  
Lie still, sleep becalmed, hide the mouth in the throat,  
Or we shall obey, and ride with you through the drowned.

*Vision and Prayer*

I

Who  
Are you  
Who is born  
In the next room  
So loud to my own  
That I can hear the womb  
Opening and the dark run  
Over the ghost and the dropped son  
Behind the wall thin as a wren's bone?  
In the birth bloody room unknown  
To the burn and turn of time  
And the heart print of man  
Bows no baptism  
But dark alone  
Blessing on  
The wild  
Child.

I  
Must lie  
Still as stone  
By the wren bone  
Wall hearing the moan  
Of the mother hidden  
And the shadowed head of pain  
Casting to-morrow like a thorn  
And the midwives of miracle sang  
Until the turbulent new born  
Burns me his name and his flame  
And the winged wall is torn  
By his torrid crown  
And the dark thrown  
From his loins  
To bright  
Light.

W h e n  
T h e w r e n  
Bone writhes down  
And the first dawn  
Furied by his stream  
Swarms on the kingdom come  
Of the dazzler of heaven  
And the splashed mothering maiden  
Who bore him with a bonfire in  
His mouth and rocked him like a storm  
I shall run lost in sudden  
Terror and shining from  
The once hooded room  
Crying in vain  
In the caldron  
Of his  
Kiss



In  
The spin  
Of the sun  
In the spuming  
Cyclone of his wing  
For I was lost who am  
Crying at the man drenched throne  
In the first fury of his stream  
And the lightnings of adoration  
Back to black silence melt and mourn  
For I was lost who have come  
To dumbfounding haven  
And the finding one  
And the high noon  
Of his wound  
Blinds my  
Cry.

There  
Crouched bare  
In the shrine  
Of his blazing  
Breast I shall waken  
To the judge blown bedlam  
Of the uncaged sea bottom  
The cloud climb of the exhaling tomb  
And the bidden dust upsailing  
With his flame in every grain.  
O spiral of ascension  
From the vultured urn  
Of the morning  
Of man when  
The land  
And

The  
Born sea  
Praised the sun  
The finding one  
And upright Adam  
Sang upon origin!  
O the wings of the children!  
The woundward flight of the ancient  
Young from the canyons of oblivion!  
The sky stride of the always slain  
In battle! the happening  
Of saints to their vision!  
The world winding home!  
And the whole pain  
Flows open  
And I  
Die.

In the name of the lost who glory in  
 The swinish plains of carrion  
 Under the burial song  
 Of the birds of burden  
 Heavy with the drowned  
 And the green dust  
 And bearing  
 The ghost  
 From  
 The ground  
 Like pollen  
 On the black plume  
 And the beak of slime  
 I pray though I belong  
 Not wholly to that lamenting  
 Brethren for joy has moved within  
 The inmost marrow of my heart bone

That he who learns now the sun and moon  
Of his mother's milk may return  
Before the lips blaze and bloom  
To the birth bloody room  
Behind the wall's wren  
Bone and be dumb  
And the womb  
That bore  
For  
All men  
The adored  
Infant light or  
The dazzling prison  
Yawn to his upcoming  
In the name of the wanton  
Lost on the unchristened mountain  
In the centre of dark I pray him

That he let the dead lie though they moan  
For his briared hands to hoist them  
To the shrine of his world's wound  
And the blood drop's garden  
Endure the stone  
Blind host to sleep  
In the dark  
And deep  
Rock  
A w a k e  
No heart bone  
But let it break  
On the mountain crown  
Unbidden by the sun  
And the beating dust be blown  
Down to the river rooting plain  
Under the night forever falling.

Forever falling night is a known  
Star and country to the legion  
Of sleepers whose tongue I toll  
To mourn his deluging  
Light through sea and soil  
And we have come  
To know all  
Places  
Ways  
Mazes  
Passages  
Quarters and graves  
Of the endless fall.  
Now common lazarus  
Of the charting sleepers prays  
Never to awake and arise  
For the country of death is the heart's size

And the star of the lost the shape of the eyes.  
In the name of the fatherless  
In the name of the unborn  
And the undesirers  
Of midwiving morning's  
Hands or instruments  
O in the name  
Of no one  
Now or  
No  
One to  
Be I pray  
May the crimson  
Sun spin a grave grey  
And the colour of clay  
Stream upon his martyrdom  
In the interpreted evening  
And the known dark of the earth amen.



I turn the corner of prayer and burn  
In a blessing of the sudden  
Sun. In the name of the damned  
I would turn back and run  
To the hidden land  
But the loud sun  
Christens down  
The sky.  
I  
Am found.  
O let him  
Scald me and drown  
Me in his world's wound.  
His lightning answers my  
Cry. My voice burns in his hand.  
Now I am lost in the blinding  
One. The sun roars at the prayer's end

## *Ballad of the Long-legged Bait*

THE BOWS glided down, and the coast  
Blackened with birds took a last look  
At his thrashing hair and whale-blue eye;  
The trodden town rang its cobbles for luck.

Then good-bye to the fishermanned  
Boat with its anchor free and fast  
As a bird hooking over the sea,  
High and dry by the top of the mast,

Whispered the affectionate sand  
And the bulwarks of the dazzled quay.  
For my sake sail, and never look back,  
Said the looking land

Sails drank the wind, and white as milk  
He sped into the drinking dark,  
The sun shipwrecked west on a pearl  
And the moon swam out of its hulk.

Funnels and masts went by in a whirl.  
Good-bye to the man on the sea-legged deck  
To the gold gut that sings on his reel  
To the bait that stalked out of the sack,

For we saw him throw to the swift flood  
A girl alive with his hooks through her lips;  
All the fishes were rayed in blood,  
Said the dwindling ships.

Good-bye to chimneys and funnéls,  
Old wives that spin in the smoke,  
He was blind to the eyes of candles  
In the praying windows of waves

But heard his bait buck in the wake  
And tussle in a shoal of loves.  
Now cast down your rod, for the whole  
Of the sea is hilly with whales,

She longs among horses and angels,  
The rainbow-fish bend in her joys,  
Floated the lost cathedral  
Chimes of the rocked buoys.

Where the anchor rode like a gull  
Miles over the moonstruck boat  
A squall of birds bellowed and fell,  
A cloud blew the rain from its throat,

He saw the storm smoke out to kill  
With fuming bows and ram of ice,  
Fire on starlight, rake Jesu's stream;  
And nothing shone on the water's face

But the oil and bubble of the moon,  
Plunging and piercing in his course  
The lured fish under the foam  
Witnessed with a kiss.

Whales in the wake like capes and Alps  
Quaked the sick sea and snouted deep,  
Deep the great bushed bait with raining lips  
Slipped the fins of those humpbacked tons

And fled their love in a weaving dip.  
Oh, Jericho was falling in their lungs!  
She nipped and dived in the nick of love,  
Spun on a spout like a long-legged ball

Till every beast blared down in a swerve  
Till every turtle crushed from his shell  
Till every bone in the rushing grave  
Rose and crowed and fell!

Good luck to the hand on the rod,  
There is thunder under its thumbs;  
Gold gut is a lightning thread,  
His fiery reel sings off its flames,

The whirled boat in the burn of his blood  
Is crying from nets to knives,  
Oh the shearwater birds and their boatsized brood  
Oh the bulls of Biscay and their calves

Are making under the green, laid veil  
The long-legged beautiful bait their wives.  
Break the black news and paint on a sail  
Huge weddings in the waves,

Over the wakeward-flashing spray  
Over the gardens of the floor  
Clash out the mourning dolphin's day,  
My mast is a bell-spire,

Strike and smoothe, for my decks are drums,  
Sing through the water-spoken prow  
The octopus walking into her limbs  
The polar eagle with his tread of snow.

From salt-lipped beak to the kick of the stern  
Sing how the seal has kissed her dead!  
The long, laid minute's bride drifts on  
Old in her cruel bed.

Over the graveyard in the water  
Mountains and galleries beneath  
Nightingale and hyena  
Rejoicing for that drifting death

Sing and howl through sand and anemone  
Valley and sahara in a shell,  
Oh all the wanting flesh his enemy  
Thrown to the sea in the shell of a girl

Is old as water and plain as an eel;  
Always good-bye to the long-legged bread  
Scattered in the paths of his heels  
For the salty birds fluttered and fed

And the tall grains foamed in their bills,  
Always good-bye to the fires of the face,  
For the crab-backed dead on the sea-bed rose  
And scuttled over her eyes,

The blind, clawed stare is cold as sleet.  
The tempter under the eyelid  
Who shows to the selves asleep  
Mast-high moon-white women naked

Walking in wishes and lovely for shame  
Is dumb and gone with his flame of brides.  
Sussanah's drowned in the bearded stream  
And no-one stirs at Sheba's side

But the hungry kings of the tides;  
Sin who had a woman's shape  
Sleeps till Silence blows on a cloud  
And all the lifted waters walk and leap.

Lucifer that bird's dropping  
Out of the sides of the north  
Has melted away and is lost  
Is always lost in her vaulted breath,

Venus lies star-struck in her wound  
And the sensual ruins make  
Seasons over the liquid world,  
White springs in the dark.

Always good-bye, cried the voices through the shell,  
Good-bye always for the flesh is cast  
And the fisherman winds his reel  
With no more desire than a ghost.

Always good luck, praised the finned in the feather  
Bird after dark and the laughing fish  
As the sails drank up the hail of thunder  
And the long-tailed lightning lit his catch.

The boat swims into the six-year weather,  
A wind throws a shadow and it freezes fast.  
See what the gold gut drags from under  
Mountains and galleries to the crest!

See what clings to hair and skull  
As the boat skims on with drinking wings!  
The statues of great rain stand still,  
And the flakes fall like hills.

Sing and strike his heavy haul  
Toppling up the boatside in a snow of light!  
His decks are drenched with miracles.  
Oh miracle of fishes! The long dead bite!

Out of the urn the size of a man  
Out of the room the weight of his trouble  
Out of the house that holds a town  
In the continent of a fossil

One by one in dust and shawl,  
Dry as echoes and insect-faced,  
His fathers cling to the hand of the girl  
And the dead hand leads the past.

Leads them as children and as air  
On to the blindly tossing tops,  
The centuries throw back their hair  
And the old men sing from newborn lips:

*Time is bearing another son  
Kill Time! She turns in her pain!  
The oak is felled in the acorn  
And the hawk in the egg kills the wren.*

He who blew the great fire in  
And died on a hiss of flames  
Or walked on the earth in the evening  
Counting the denials of the grains

Clings to her drifting hair, and climbs;  
And he who taught their lips to sing  
Weeps like the risen sun among  
The liquid choirs of his tribes.

The rod bends low, divining land,  
And through the sundered water crawls  
A garden holding to her hand  
With birds and animals



With men and women and waterfalls  
Trees cool and dry in the whirlpool of ships  
And stunned and still on the green, laid veil  
Sand with legends in its virgin laps

And prophets loud on the burned dunes;  
Insects and valleys hold her thighs hard,  
Time and places grip her breast bone,  
She is breaking with seasons and clouds;

Round her trailed wrist fresh water weaves,  
With moving fish and rounded stones  
Up and down the greater waves  
A separate river breathes and runs;

Strike and sing his catch of fields  
For the surge is sown with barley,  
The cattle graze on the covered foam,  
The hills have footed the waves away,

With wild sea fillies and soaking bridles  
With salty colts and gales in their limbs  
All the horses of his haul of miracles  
Gallop through the arched, green farms,

Trot and gallop with gulls upon them  
And thunderbolts in their manes.  
O Rome and Sodom To-morrow and London  
The country tide is cobbled with towns,

And steeples pierce the cloud on her shoulder  
And the streets that the fisherman combed  
When his long-legged flesh was a wind on fire  
And his loin was a hunting flame

Coil from the thoroughfares of her hair  
And terribly lead him home alive  
Lead her prodigal home to his terror,  
The furious ox-killing house of love.

Down, down, down, under the ground,  
Under the floating villages,  
Turns the moon-chained and water-wound  
Metropolis of fishes,

There is nothing left of the sea but its sound,  
Under the earth the loud sea walks,  
In deathbeds of orchards the boat dies down  
And the bait is drowned among hayricks,

Land, land, land, nothing remains  
Of the pacing, famous sea but its speech,  
And into its talkative seven tombs  
The anchor dives through the floors of a church.

Good-bye, good luck, struck the sun and the moon,  
To the fisherman lost on the land.  
He stands alone at the door of his home,  
With his long-legged heart in his hand.

## *Holy Spring*

O

Out of a bed of love  
When that immortal hospital made one more move to soothe  
The cureless counted body,  
And ruin and his causes  
Over the barbed and shooting sea assumed an army  
And swept into our wounds and houses,  
I climb to greet the war in which I have no heart but only  
That one dark I owe my light,  
Call for confessor and wiser mirror but there is none  
To glow after the god stoning night  
And I am struck as lonely as a holy maker by the sun.

No

Praise that the spring time is all  
Gabriel and radiant shrubbery as the morning grows joyful  
Out of the woebegone pyre  
And the multitude's sultry tear turns cool on the weeping  
wall,  
My arising prodigal  
Sun the father his quiver full of the infants of pure fire,  
But blessed be hail and upheaval  
That uncalm still it is sure alone to stand and sing  
Alone in the husk of man's home  
And the mother and toppling house of the holy spring,  
If only for a last time.

## *Fern Hill*

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs  
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,  
    The night above the dingle starry,  
    Time let me hail and climb  
    Golden in the heydays of his eyes,  
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns  
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves  
    Trail with daisies and barley  
    Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns  
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,  
    In the sun that is young once only,  
    Time let me play and be  
    Golden in the mercy of his means,  
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the  
    calves  
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,  
    And the sabbath rang slowly  
    In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay  
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it  
    was air  
And playing, lovely and watery  
    And fire green as grass.

And nightly under the simple stars<sup>c</sup>  
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,  
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the night-  
jars  
Flying with the ricks, and the horses  
Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white  
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all  
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,  
The sky gathered again  
And the sun grew round that very day.  
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light  
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking  
warm  
Out of the whinnying green stable  
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house  
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,  
In the sun born over and over,  
I ran my heedless ways,  
My wishes raced through the house high hay  
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows  
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs  
Before the children green and golden  
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would  
take me  
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,  
In the moon that is always rising,

Not that riding to sleep  
I should hear him fly with the high fields  
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.  
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,  
Time held me green and dying  
Though I sang in my chains like the sea

## *In country sleep*

### I

NEVER and never, my girl riding far and near  
In the land of the hearthstone tales, and spelled asleep,  
Fear or believe that the wolf in a sheepwhite hood  
Loping and bleating roughly and blithely shall leap,  
My dear, my dear,  
Out of a lair in the flocked leaves in the dew dipped year  
To eat your heart in the house in the rosy wood.

Sleep, good, for ever, slow and deep, spelled rare and wise,  
My girl ranging the night in the rose and shire  
Of the hobnail tales: no gooseherd or swine will turn  
Into a homestall king or hamlet of fire

And prince of ice  
To court the honeyed heart from your side before sunrise  
In a spinney of ringed boys and ganders, spike and burn,

Nor the innocent lie in the rooting dingle wooed  
And staved, and riven among plumes my rider weep.  
From the broomed witch's spume you are shielded by fern  
And flower of country sleep and the greenwood keep.

Lie fast and soothed,  
Safe be and smooth from the bellows of the rushy brood.  
Never, my girl, until tolled to sleep by the stern

Bell believe or fear that the rustic shade or spell  
Shall harrow and snow the blood while you ride wide and  
near,

For who unmanringly haunts the mountain ravened eaves  
Or skulks in the dell moon but moonshine echoing clear  
From the starred well?  
A hill touches an angel. Out of a saint's cell  
The nightbird lauds through nunneries and domes of leaves

Her robin breasted tree, three Marys in the rays.  
*Sanctum sanctorum* the animal eye of the wood  
In the rain telling its beads, and the gravest ghost  
The owl at its knelling. Fox and holt kneel before blood  
Now the tales praise  
The star rise at pasture and nightlong the fables graze  
On the lord's-table of the bowing grass. Fear most

For ever of all not the wolf in his baaing hood  
Nor the tusked prince, in the ruttish farm, at the rind  
And mire of love, but the Thief as meek as the dew. ;  
The country is holy: O bide in that country kind,  
Know the green good,  
Under the prayer wheeling moon in the rosy wood  
Be shielded by chant and flower and gay may you

Lie in grace. Sleep spelled at rest in the lowly house  
In the squirrel nimble grove, under linen and thatch  
And star: held and blessed, though you scour the high four  
Winds, from the dousing shade and the roarer at the latch,  
Cool in your vows.  
Yet out of the beaked, web dark and the pouncing boughs  
Be you sure the Thief will seek a way sly and sure



And sly as snow and meek as dew blown to the thorn,  
This night and each vast night until the stern bell talks  
In the tower and tolls to sleep over the stalls  
Of the hearthstone tales my own, lost love; and the soul  
walks

The waters shorn

This night and each night since the falling star you were born,  
Ever and ever he finds a way, as the snow falls,

As the rain falls, hail on the fleece, as the vale mist rides  
Through the haygold stalls, as the dew falls on the wind-  
Milled dust of the apple tree and the pounded islands  
Of the morning leaves, as the star falls, as the winged  
Apple seed glides,  
And falls, and flowers in the yawning wound at our sides,  
As the world falls, silent as the cyclone of silence.

## II

Night and the reindeer on the clouds above the haycocks  
And the wings of the great roc ribboned for the fair!  
The leaping saga of prayer! And high, there, on the hare-  
Heeled winds the rooks  
Cawing from their black bethels soaring, the holy books  
Of birds! Among the cocks like fire the red fox

Burning! Night and the vein of birds in the winged, sloe  
wrist  
Of the wood! Pastoral beat of blood through the laced  
leaves!

The stream from the priest black wristed spinney and sleeves  
Of thistling frost  
Of the nightingale's din and tale! The upgiven ghost  
Of the dingle torn to singing and the surpliced

Hill of cypresses! The din and tale in the skimmed  
Yard of the buttermilk rain on the pail! The sermon  
Of blood! The bird loud vein! The saga from mermen  
To seraphim  
Leaping! The gospel rooks! All tell, this night, of him  
Who comes as red as the fox and sly as the heeled wind.

Illumination of music! the lulled black-backed  
Gull, on the wave with sand in its eyes! And the foal moves  
Through the shaken greensward lake, silent, on moonshod  
hooves,

In the winds' wakes  
Music of elements, that a miracle makes!  
Earth, air, water, fire, singing into the white act,

The haygold haired, my love asleep, and the rift blue  
Eyed, in the haloed house, in her rareness and hilly  
High riding, held and blessed and true, and so stilly  
Lying the sky  
Might cross its planets, the bell weep, night gather her eyes,  
The Thief fall on the dead like the willy nilly dew,

Only for the turning of the earth in her holy  
Heart! Slyly, slowly, hearing the wound in her side go  
Round the sun, he comes to my love like the designed snow,  
And truly he  
Flows to the strand of flowers like the dew's ruly sea,  
And surely he sails like the ship shape clouds. Oh he

Comes designed to my love to steal not her tide raking  
Wound, nor her riding high, nor her eyes, nor kindled hair,  
But her faith that each vast night and the saga of prayer

He comes to take

Her faith that this last night for his unsacred sake

He comes to leave her in the lawless sun awaking

Naked and forsaken to grieve he will not come.

Ever and ever by all your vows believe and fear

My dear this night he comes and night without end my dear

Since you were born

And you shall wake, from country sleep, this dawn and each  
first dawn,

Your faith as deathless as the outcry of the ruled sun.

## *Over Sir John's hill*

OVER Sir John's hill,  
The hawk on fire hangs still;  
In a hoisted cloud, at drop of dusk, he pulls to his claws  
And gallows, up the rays of his eyes the small birds of  
the bay  
And the shrill child's play  
Wars  
Of the sparrows and such who swansing, dusk, in wrangling  
hedges.  
And blithely they squawk  
To fiery tyburn over the wrestle of elms until  
The flash the noosed hawk  
Crashes, and slowly the fishing holy stalking heron  
In the river Towy below bows his tilted headstone.

Flash, and the plumes crack,  
And a black cap of jack-  
Daws Sir John's just hill dons, and again the gulled birds  
hare  
To the hawk on fire, the halter height, over Towy's fins,  
In a whack of wind.  
There  
Where the elegiac fisherbird stabs and paddles  
In the pebbly dab-filled  
Shallow and sedge, and 'dilly dilly,' calls the loft hawk,  
'Come and be killed,'  
I open the leaves of the water at a passage  
Of psalms and shadows among the pincer'd sandcrabs  
prancing

And read, in a shell,  
Death clear as a buoy's bell.  
All praise of the hawk on fire in hawk-eyed dusk be sung,  
When his viperish fuse hangs looped with flames under the  
brand  
Wing, and blest shall  
Young  
Green chickens of the bay and bushes cluck, 'dilly dilly,  
Come let us die.'  
We grieve as the blithe birds, never again, leave shingle  
and elm,  
The heron and I,  
I young Aesop fabling to the near night by the dingle  
Of eels, saint heron hymning in the shell-hung distant

Crystal harbour vale  
Where the sea cobbles sail,  
And wharves of water where the walls dance and the white  
cranes stilt.  
It is the heron and I, under judging Sir John's elmed  
Hill, tell-tale the knelled  
Guilt  
Of the led-astray birds whom God, for their breast of  
whistles,  
Have mercy on,  
God in his whirlwind silence save, who marks the sparrows  
hail,  
For their souls' song.  
Now the heron grieves in the weeded verge. Through  
windows  
Of dusk and water I see the tilting whispering

Heron, mirrored, go,  
As the snapt feathers snow,  
Fishing in the tear of the Towy. Only a hoot owl  
Hollows, a grassblade blown in cupped hands, in the looted  
    elms  
And no green cocks or hens  
Shout  
Now on Sir John's hill. The heron, anking the scaly  
Lowlands of the waves,  
Makes all the music, and I who hear the tune of the slow,  
Wear-willow river, grave,  
Before the lunge of the night, the notes on this time-shaken  
Stone for the sake of the souls of the slain birds sailing.

## *Poem on his birthday*

IN THE mustardseed sun,  
By full tilt river and switchback sea  
Where the cormorants scud,  
In his house on stilts high among beaks  
And palavers of birds  
This sandgrain day in the bent bay's grave  
He celebrates and spurns  
His driftwood thirty-fifth wind turned age;  
Herons spire and spear.

Under and round him go  
Flounders, gulls, on their cold, dying trails,  
Doing what they are told,  
Curlews aloud in the congered waves  
Work at their ways to death,  
And the rhymers in the long tongued room,  
Who tolls his birthday bell,  
Toils towards the ambush of his wounds;  
Herons, steeple stemmed, bless.

In the thistledown fall,  
He sings towards anguish, finches fly  
In the claw tracks of hawks  
On a seizing sky; small fishes glide  
Through wynds and shells of drowned  
Ship towns to pastures of otters. He  
In his slant, racking house  
And the hewn coils of his trade perceives  
Herons walk in their shroud,

The livelong river's robe  
Of minnows wreathing around their prayer,  
And far at sea he knows,  
Who slaves to his crouched, eternal end  
Under a serpent cloud,  
Dolphins dive in their turnturtle dust,  
The rippled seals streak down  
To kill and their own tide daubing blood  
Slides good in the sleek mouth.

In a cavernous, swung  
Wave's silence, wept white angelus knells  
Thirty-five bells sing struck  
On skull and scar where his loves lie wrecked,  
Steered by the falling stars.  
And to-morrow weeps in a blind cage  
Terror will rage apart  
Before chains break to a hammer flame  
And love unbolts the dark

And freely he goes lost  
In the unknown, famous light of great  
And fabulous, dear God  
Dark is a way and light is a place,  
Heaven that never was  
Nor will be ever is always true,  
And, in that brambled void,  
Plenty as blackberries in the woods  
The dead grow for His joy.



There he might wander bare  
With the spirits of the horseshoe bay  
Or the stars' seashore dead,  
Marrow of eagles, the roots of whales  
And wishbones of wild geese,  
With blessed, unborn God and His Ghost,  
And every soul His priest,  
Gulled and chanter in young Heaven's fold  
Be at cloud quaking peace,

But dark is a long way.  
He, on the earth of the night, alone  
With all the living, prays,  
Who knows the rocketing wind will blow  
The bones out of the hills,  
And the scythed boulders bleed, and the last  
Rage shattered waters kick  
Masts and fishes to the still quick stars,  
Faithlessly unto Him

Who is the light of old  
And air shaped Heaven where souls grow wild  
As horses in the foam:  
Oh, let me midlife mourn by the shrined  
And druid herons' vows  
The voyage to ruin I must run,  
Dawn ships clouted aground,  
Yet, though I cry with tumbledown tongue,  
Count my blessings aloud:

Four elements and five  
Senses, and man a spirit in love  
Tangling through this spun slime  
To his nimbus bell cool kingdom come  
And the lost, moonshine domes,  
And the sea that hides his secret selves  
Deep in its black, base bones,  
Lulling of spheres in the seashell flesh,  
And this last blessing most,

That the closer I move  
To death, one man through his sundered hulks,  
The louder the sun blooms  
And the tusked, ramshackling sea exults;  
And every wave of the way  
And gale I tackle, the whole world then,  
With more triumphant faith  
Than ever was since the world was said,  
Spins its morning of praise,

I hear the bouncing hills  
Grow larked and greener at berry brown  
Fall and the dew larks sing  
Taller this thunderclap spring, and how  
More spanned with angels ride  
The mansouled fiery islands! Oh,  
Holier than their eyes,  
And my shining men no more alone  
As I sail out to die.

## *Lament*

WHEN I was a windy boy and a bit  
And the black spit of the chapel fold,  
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of women),  
I tiptoed shy in the gooseberry wood,  
The rude owl cried like a telltale tit,  
I skipped in a blush as the big girls rolled  
Ninepin down on the donkeys' common,  
And on seesaw sunday nights I wooed  
Whoever I would with my wicked eyes,  
The whole of the moon I could love and leave  
All the green leaved little weddings' wives  
In the coal black bush and let them grieve.

When I was a gusty man and a half  
And the black beast of the beetles' pews,  
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of bitches),  
Not a boy and a bit in the wick-  
Dipping moon and drunk as a new dropped calf,  
I whistled all night in the twisted flues,  
Midwives grew in the midnight ditches,  
And the sizzling beds of the town cried, Quick!-  
Whenever I dove in a breast high shoal,  
Wherever I ramped in the clover quilts,  
Whatsoever I did in the coal-  
Black night, I left my quivering prints.

When I was a man you could call a man  
And the black cross of the holy house,  
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of welcome),  
Brandy and ripe in my bright, bass prime,  
No springtailed tom in the red hot town

With every shimmering woman his mouse  
But a hillocky bull in the swelter  
Of summer come in his great good time  
To the sultry, biding herds, I said,  
Oh, time enough when the blood creeps cold,  
And I lie down but to sleep in bed,  
For my sulking, skulking, coal black soul!

When I was a half of the man I was  
And serve me right as the preachers warn,  
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of downfall),  
No flailing calf or cat in a flame  
Or hickory bull in milky grass  
But a black sheep with a crumpled horn,  
At last the soul from its foul mousehole  
Slunk pouting out when the limp time came;  
And I gave my soul a blind, slashed eye,  
Gristle and rind, and a roarers' life,  
And I shoved it into the coal black sky  
To find a woman's soul for a wife.

Now I am a man no more no more  
And a black reward for a roaring life,  
(Sighed the old ram rod, dying of strangers),  
Tidy and cursed in my dove cooed room  
I lie down thin and hear the good bells jaw—  
For, oh, my soul found a sunday wife  
In the coal black sky and she bore angels!  
Harpies around me out of her womb!  
Chastity prays for me, piety sings,  
Innocence sweetens my last black breath,  
Modesty hides my thighs in her wings,  
And all the deadly virtues plague my death!

*In the white giant's thigh*

THROUGH throats where many rivers meet, the curlews cry,  
Under the conceiving moon, on the high chalk hill,  
And there this night I walk in the white giant's thigh  
Where barren as boulders women lie longing still

To labour and love though they lay down long ago.

Through throats where many rivers meet, the women pray,  
Pleading in the waded bay for the seed to flow  
Though the names on their weed grown stones are rained  
away,

And alone in the night's eternal, curving act  
They yearn with tongues of curlews for the unconceived  
And immemorial sons of the cudgelling, hacked

Hill. Who once in gooseskin winter loved all ice leaved  
In the courters' lanes, or twined in the ox roasting sun  
In the wains tonned so high that the wisps of the hay  
Clung to the pitching clouds, or gay with any one  
Young as they in the after milking moonlight lay

Under the lighted shapes of faith and their moonshade  
Petticoats galed high, or shy with the rough riding boys,  
Now clasp me to their grains in the gigantic glade,

Who once, green countries since, were a hedgerow of joys.

Time by, their dust was flesh the swineherd rooted sly,  
Flared in the reek of the wiving sty with the rush  
Light of his thighs, spreadeagle to the dunghill sky,  
Or with their orchard man in the core of the sun's bush  
Rough as cows' tongues and thrashed with brambles their  
• buttermilk

Manes, under his quenchless summer barbed gold to the  
bone,

Or rippling soft in the spinney moon as the silk  
And ducked and draked white lake that harps to a hail stone.

Who once were a bloom of wayside brides in the hawed  
house

And heard the lewd, wooed field flow to the coming frost,  
The scurrying, furred small friars squeal, in the dowse  
Of day, in the thistle aisles, till the white owl crossed

Their breast, the vaulting does roister, the horned<sup>a</sup> bucks  
climb

Quick in the wood at love, where a torch of foxes foams,  
All birds and beasts of the linked night uproar and chime

And the mole snout blunt under his pilgrimage of domes,  
Or, butter fat goosegirls, bounced in a gambo bed,  
Their breasts full of honey, under their gander king  
Trounced by his wings in the hissing shippen, long dead  
And gone that barley dark where their clogs danced in the  
spring,

And their firefly hairpins flew, and the ricks ran round—

(But nothing bore, no mouthing babe to the veined hives  
Hugged, and barren and bare on Mother Goose's ground  
They with the simple Jacks were a boulder of wives)—

Now curlew cry me down to kiss the mouths of their dust.

The dust of their kettles and clocks swings to and fro  
Where the hay rides now or the bracken kitchens rust  
As the arc of the billhooks that flashed the hedges low  
And cut the birds' boughs that the minstrel sap ran red.  
They from houses where the harvest kneels, hold me hard,  
Who heard the tall bell sail down the Sundays of the dead  
And the rain wring out its tongues on the faded yard,  
Teach me the love that is evergreen after the fall leaved  
Grave, after Belovéd on the grass gulfed cross is scrubbed  
Off by the sun and Daughters no longer grieved  
Save by their long desires in the fox cubbed  
Streets or hungering in the crumbled wood. to these  
Hale dead and deathless do the women of the hill  
Love fôr ever meridian through the courtiers' trees

And the daughters of darkness flame like Fawkes fires still

## *Elegy*

TOO PROUD to die, broken and blind he died  
The darkest way, and did not turn away,  
A cold kind man brave in his narrow pride

On that darkest day. Oh, forever may  
He lie lightly, at last, on the last, crossed  
Hill, under the grass, in love, and there grow

Young among the long flocks, and never lie lost  
Or still all the numberless days of his death, though  
Above all he longed for his mother's breast

Which was rest and dust, and in the kind ground  
The darkest justice of death, blind and unblessed.  
Let him find no rest but be fathered and found,

I prayed in the crouching room, by his blind bed,  
In the muted house, one minute before  
Noon, and night, and light. The rivers of the dead

Veined his poor hand I held, and I saw  
Through his unseeing eyes to the roots of the sea.  
(An old tormented man three-quarters blind,

I am not too proud to cry that He and he  
Will never never go out of my mind  
All his bones crying, and poor in all but pain,



Being innocent, he dreaded that he died  
Hating his God, but what he was was plain:  
An old kind man brave in his burning pride.

The sticks of the house were his, his books he owned  
Even as a baby he had never cried,  
Nor did he now, save to his secret wound.

Out of his eyes I saw the last light glide.  
Here among the light of the lording sky  
An old blind man is with me where I go

Walking in the meadows of his son's eye  
On whom a world of ills came down like snow.  
He cried as he died, fearing at last the spheres'

Last sound, the world going out without a breath:  
Too proud to cry, too frail to check the tears,  
And caught between two nights, blindness and death

O deepest wound of all that he should die  
On that darkest day. Oh, he could hide  
The tears out of his eyes, too proud to cry.

Until I die he will not leave my side )

This unfinished Elegy of Dylan Thomas was given the title 'Elegy' in the latest version of the poem after the provisional titles 'The Darkest Way' or 'Too Proud to Die' or 'True Death' had been used in preparatory drafts. Among his papers he left sixty pages of manuscript work towards the poem, including this note:

- (1) *Although he was too proud to die, he did die, blind, in the most agonizing way but he did not flinch from death and was brave in his pride*
- (2) *In his innocence, and thinking he was God-hating, he never knew that what he was was an old kind man in his burning pride*
- (3) *Now he will not leave my side, though he is dead*
- (4) *His mother said that as a baby he never cried, nor did he, as an old man, he just cried to his secret wound and his blindness, never aloud*

The rest of the manuscript work consists of phrases, lines, couplets, and line-endings, and transcripts of the poem in various degrees of completeness. The two most complete versions, which are clearly the latest, are both written in quatrains. One, with no title, has no division into verses, and the second, with the title 'Elegy,' is divided into verses of three lines. This, to me, seems to be the latest version of all, and seems to hold the final form the poem was to take. The poem extends to the seventeenth line, ending 'to the roots of the sea,' after which there is a line which is deleted.

The extension of the poem has been built up from the manuscript notes. The lines are all found there, except that two or three have been adjusted to fit the rhyming scheme. 'Breath' was an isolated marginal word which I have used in line thirty-four, and 'plain,' which ends line twenty-three, has been added to 'was' without justification from the manuscript. In the third line I have chosen 'narrow pride' as against 'burning pride,' although 'burning' occurs more often than 'narrow' in the transcripts, but it was 'narrow' in that line that he quoted to me from memory when I last saw him.

Of the added lines sixteen are exactly as Dylan Thomas wrote them, and the remainder are only altered to the extent of an inversion or one or two words. Their order might well have been different. The poem might also have been made much longer. It recalls the earlier poem, also written for his father 'Do not go gentle into that good night'; but it is clear that in this last poem Dylan Thomas was attempting something even more immediate and more difficult.

*Vernon Watkins*